A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF PAULINE AND EARLY GNOSTIC LITERATURE DEMONSTRATING THAT PAUL WAS NOT PROTO-GNOSTIC

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ABSTRACT

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There are scholars who classify Paul as proto-gnostic because of similarities in his writings and those of the early gnostics. The similarities are basically in vocabulary, doctrinal concepts and emphases. It is the contention of the writer that these similarities need not lead to the classification of Paul as proto-gnostic, but that they can be accounted for just as consistently from another perspective.

To demonstrate this thesis, I first survey the early gnostic groups. Beginning at the second century where the movement crystallized, I retrogress through the first century to the Qumran Community. Select categories of cosmogony-cosmology, theology, anthropology, soteriology, morality and eschatology serve as guidelines in order to accentuate the basic doctrinal areas. These categories are applied to gnostic writings as found in the sources of reports of the early Church Fathers, select Nag Hammadi texts (recently discovered gnostic texts) and the apparent incipient Gnosticism as combatted in the New Testament. A study of the Dead Sea Scrolls was also included because many scholars believe the vocabulary and concepts found in them to be gnostic. This composes chapter one.

In chapter two the same categories are applied to select writings of Paul. Only those letters about which there is little or no question of Pauline authorship are examined. As Paul's writings were essentially letters to churches and not theological treatises, pertinent, representative passages are chosen from them. No attempt is made to be exhaustive.

Chapter three then shows the various facets of similarity in each of the categories. The chapter also presents a representative view of those who regard Paul as proto-gnostic. The thesis of Dr. Robert Grant as expressed in his book Gnosticism and Early Christianity is explained. Dr. Grant believes that Gnosticism rose as a result of the failure of Jewish apocalypticism. The manner in which he believes the similarities in gnostic and Pauline literature affirm his thesis, and reveal Paul as a proto-gnostic, is also set forth.

Chapter four contrasts the basic views of the early gnostics and Paul. Each of the categories is again examined, and it is shown that in spite of the many similarities, there are in each of the categories very fundamental differences in Pauline and gnostic views. These differences are of such an inharmonious nature that one would not move easily from one position to the other. To demonstrate that Paul was not in the process of such a change, the chapter then offers an alternate explanation for the similarities of vocabulary, concepts and emphasis.

PREFACE

Most students of Gnosticism have been concerned with its origins, or in identifying the course(s) Gnosticism may have taken as it developed from its source(s) to its apex in the second century. In this paper I am not concerned with the origins or the routes of Gnosticism's development. Rather, I am concerned with the effect Gnosticism may have had on the teaching of the Apostle Paul. To argue this point, I will attempt to define first century Gnosticism in order to compare it with pertinent sections of Paul's epistles.

Because there are certain factors present in the literature of Paul as well as that of the gnostics, some scholars classify Paul as protognostic. I should like to demonstrate that this need not be the case, and that it is possible, and consistent, to explain these similarities from quite another perspective.

It is commonly accepted that the development of Gnosticism did reach its apex in the second century. Chapter one of this thesis, therefore, will be a retrogressive survey from this time of apex in the second century back to the pre-Christian period. It is hoped that by running the film backwards, one will catch new insights and a better understanding of "first century Gnosticism." Chapter two will present an analysis of what Paul's views were in parallel areas. Chapter three will be a comparison of the first two chapters by extracting the similarities and dissimilarities systematically. Chapter four will demonstrate that the similarities do not have to be explained by assigning Paul as one inclined toward gnostic views, but that Paul can be understood just as consistently from another perspective.

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INTRODUCTION

What was Gnosticism like in the first century? I will attempt to reconstruct it by means of a retrogressive survey from available material of second century Gnosticism back through materials of the first. This particular method was chosen because it is in the second century that Gnosticism unquestionably exists, and from this base it is possible to move from the known back to the lesser known. Previous to the second century one speaks of gnosis, and gnostic-like materials, but not of Gnosticism per se. This distinction is quite necessary in order to appreciate the retrogressive approach.

The term, "Gnosticism" will be used to refer specifically to the Christian heresy of the second century, and this term, Gnosticism will be distinguished from the broader term, "gnosis," or the whole complex of ideas belonging to the gnostic movement and related schools of thought.

Particular ideas of Gnosticism can be traced back to the pre-Christian period. Van Unnik, for example, sees Gnosticism as the product of a world of religious ideas flowing and mingling together, i.e., Iran contributed dualism, Babylon astrology, Syria and Western Asia the worship of the sun, Greece philosophy, Egypt the Isis-Osiris cult, Judaism the Old Testament Scriptures, etc., etc.[1] However, the distinction between Gnosticism and the ideas which Gnosticism later incorporated must be kept in mind.

Dr. Robert Wilson states in his book, Gnosis and the New Testament:

> Were these ideas already Gnostic in the lands of their origin, or at what point do they become Gnostic? Here it seems there is a real possibility of clarifying our procedures if we think in terms of growth and development. The ideas admittedly are pre-Christian but the combination of these ideas, the way in which they are blended together, the associations which they come to have, these may only be Gnostic in the context of specifically Gnostic systems, which would mean that the ideas themselves are not necessarily Gnostic. The Gnostics adapted to their own ends the material they took over, and it is no small part of our problem to determine whether at any given point a particular term or concept carries the Gnostic connotation.[2]

Dr. Wilson is not alone in his appraisal. In An Introduction to the Theology of the New Testament, Dr. Alan Richardson says:

> The objection to speaking of Gnosticism in the first century A.D. is that we are in danger of hypostatising certain rather ill-defined tendencies of thought and then speaking as if there were a religion or religious philosophy, called Gnosticism, which could be contrasted with Judaism or Christianity. There was of course no such thing.[3]

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[1] W. C. Van Unnik, Newly Discovered Gnostic Writings, (Naperville: Alec R. Allenson, Inc., 1960), pp. 35-36. [Hereafter NDGW].

[2] Robert McL. Wilson, Gnosis and the New Testament (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1968), p. 10. [Hereafter GNT].

[3] (London, 1958), p. 41.

In Wilson's mind, it is a fundamental mistake to think of the whole gnostic movement merging in the glory of final development, or, to assume that where one or two elements of later gnostic thought are present that the whole range of Gnosticism is already present.[4]

Dr. Wilson's words in his earlier work, The Gnostic Problem helps lead to a conclusion:

> It has been admitted that there was at the beginning of the Christian era a considerable amount of speculation which was at least moving in the direction of Gnosticism as it appears in full flourish in the second century; but it has been suggested that there are also differences sufficient to necessitate a distinction between what may properly be called Gnostic and what is not yet fully Gnostic but at most pre-gnostic, semi-gnostic, or gnosticising. The Gnostic movement did not come into being in a day, although, indeed, some of the theories appear to have developed very rapidly. Allowance must be made for a gradual process of growth and development, and somewhere in the course of this development there is a point of transition. In the nature of the case, it is inevitable that this point of transition should be differently placed by different scholars, but it has been urged that there is a real need for a clearer definition of terms, and a greater attention to questions of chronology.[5]

Gnosticism proper then is represented by the second century heretics. Materials such as those from Philo and the Dead Sea Scrolls are pre-gnostic.

If Gnosticism as such did not exist until the second century, and then it was the crystallization of a movement, the sixth decade of the first century cannot be too far removed from what must have been a beginning of a coalescence of the movement. Indeed many speak of an incipient Gnosticism in the Pauline period. I will attempt to show this because the interest of this paper centers on whether or not Paul was attracted and influenced by gnosis. Therefore, the reconstruction is both reasonable and necessary.

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[4] Wilson, GNT, p. 15.

[5] Robert McL Wilson, The Gnostic Problem (London: A. R. Mowbry & Col, Limited, 1958), p. 97. [Hereafter TGP].

Retrogression will also help to estimate first century "Gnosticism." Gnosticism of the second century involves a series of coherent characteristics, and consequently forms the logical touchstone for any such estimation. To quote Dr. Robert McL. Wilson:

> The starting point for all investigation must be the 'classical' Gnosticism of the second Christian century and after, for here we have a clearly-defined and manageable group of systems all showing certain common characteristics.[6]

Writing in Interpretation, Wm. R. Schoedel would seem to endorse this methodology, as there he says:

> Unfortunately, solid documentary evidence for the Gnostic movement comes from the second century after Christ, at the earliest. The evidence used to establish the existence of a pre-Christian Gnosis is essentially of two kinds: (1) references to what sound like Gnostic themes in literature that we can date, and (2) elements within later Gnostic sources which for one reason or the other appear to go back to pre-Christian times.
>
> Within the first class is the New Testament itself . . .[7]

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[6] GNT, p. 22.

[7] Interpretation, "The Rediscovery of Gnosis" (Vol. XVI, No. 4), pp. 393-394.

R. P. Casey's chapter, "Gnosis, Gnosticism and the New Testament" in The Background of the New Testament and Its Eschatology, also clearly shows this approach.[8]

This method is moving from the known, back to the lesser known; "referring to what sounds like gnostic themes in literature that we can date."

The method demands care. As Dr. Wilson points out:

> One problem here is to avoid the reading back into first century terminology of associations and connotations which that terminology does have in the second century, and at the same time to recognize, already in the first century, the points of growth for second century theories, or even the emergence in embryonic form of incipient Gnostic systems which only come to full development later.[9]

With these considerations in view, the questions can then be asked, if the second century represents the crystallization of Gnosticism, what was its form in the sixth decade of the first century? What relation did it bear to the Apostle Paul, if any?

It is to the first of these questions that Chapter One now addresses itself.

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[8] W. D. Davies, ed., (Cambridge: University Press), 1956.

[9] GNT, p. 23.

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CHAPTER I

A RETROGRESSIVE SURVEY OF EARLY GNOSTIC CONCEPTS

A. From Materials in the Church Fathers

Of the many gnostic groups, there are those more closely related to the Church than others. Since this paper is concerned with the relationship of Gnosticism to New Testament materials, those writings where a definite relationship to the Church is accepted by the majority of scholars will be examined.

There are approximately fifteen such gnostic groups referred to in the writings of the early Church Fathers. An exhaustive study of each one of them is not essential to clearly appreciate the character of gnostic thought as it is presented by them. So some of the more important representative positions have been selected.

In order to build a meaningful body of material for comparison with Pauline writings, the following categories have been chosen as guidelines for the analysis: cosmogony/cosmology, theology, anthropology, soteriology, morality, and eschatology. These categories will emphasize the unique areas of Gnosticism. Its views of origins and deity offer a philosophy of man's nature, environment and human predicament. Man needs deliverance from that predicament. The solution to that problem with the accompanying implications are found in the remaining categories. The sources for each of the individual groups studied will not always contain information from which to draw conclusions regarding each category. They will, nevertheless, keep the study of each group being considered on a theological basis and thus be a strong base for comparison with the concepts of Paul.

1. Simon Magus

The early Church Fathers regarded the Simon Magus, referred to in the eighth chapter of Acts, as the father of all heresy.[1] Irenaeus, who possibly wrote following a treatise written by Justin Martyr, which by the way is now lost, traces the origin of all gnostic doctrines to Simon. Having described somewhat extendedly the Valentinian system, Irenaeus says:

> Since, therefore, it is a complex and multiform task to detect and convict all the heretics, and since our design is to reply to them all according to their special characters, we have judged it necessary, first of all, to give an account of their source and root, in order that, by getting a knowledge of their most exalted Bythus, thou mayest understand the nature of the tree which has produced such fruits.[2]

Irenaeus, with reference to the incident in Acts 8:9-11, goes on to describe the system of Simon, declaring that Simon held himself to be some great one, and indeed says that his followers proclaimed of him, "This is the power of God." As a magician, Simon gained considerable regard, and influenced many people by his sorceries. The Acts account attributes his relation to the Church as being only a means by which he hoped to accrue yet more craft, thinking he would be able to give the Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands just as the apostles did. According to Irenaeus, the rebuke he suffered from Peter (Acts 8:20-24) was the cause of his setting "himself eagerly to contend against the apostles, in order that he himself might seem to be a wonderful being, and he applied himself with still greater zeal to the study of the whole magic art, that he might the better bewilder and overpower multitudes of man."[3]

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[1] Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, Vol. I of *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, eds., Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (American reprint of the Edinburgh edition; Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., n.d.), 9 vols., I, 23. [Hereafter referred to as Iren. AH].

[2] Ibid., I, 23.

Simon taught that he appeared among the Jews as the Son, descended in Samaria as the Father, and came to other nations in the character of the Holy Spirit. He was the loftiest of all powers, "the Being who is Father over all."[4] According to Irenaeus, even Claudius Caesar honored him with a statue because of his magical power. This may very well be based on Justin Martyr's account which states that the inscription on the statue read, "Simoni Deo Sancto" (to Simon the Holy God). Grant says, "Presumably it was really a statue of the good Semo Sancus."[5] An opinion to the contrary, however, is that of the editors of the Ante-Nicene Fathers,[6] "Simon Magus appears to be one with whom Justin Martyr is perfectly familiar, and hence we are not to conclude rashly that he blundered as to the divine honours rendered to him as the Sabine God." Simon's presence among men was accounted for in his cosmogony. As the loftiest of all powers, he conceived in his mind of forming angels and archangels. The thought, or Ennoea, comprehending his will leaped forth from him and descended to the lower regions of space and generated angels; however, that detained Ennoea who had produced them. Indeed, she suffered such adverse abuse from them that she was consequently not able to return to her father. She was shut up in a human body, passing from age to age from one female body to another. She was, for example, at one time Helen of Troy, but she finally came to the low state of a common prostitute, Helena. Simon redeemed her from this slavery, and after that she became his constant companion. It was, in fact, to free her, and to confer salvation on men that he came and made himself known. When he came, he appeared simply to be only a man who was to suffer in Judaea. He really did not. This was all made necessary because of the state of affairs created by the angels and powers.[7]

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[3] Ibid., I, 23.

[4] Ibid., I, 23.

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[5] Robert M. Grant, Gnosticism: A Sourcebook of Heretical Writings from the Early Christian Period (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1961), p. 28.

[6] Roberts and Donaldson, I, 193, footnote 3.

[7] Iren. AH, I, 23.

This cosmogony, as found in Irenaeus' account, is relatively simple, and it is thought that the account of Hippolytus (VI. 13) which is much more complex is possibly an elaboration of Simon's followers. It is characterized, however, by a distinctively gnostic anti-Jewish bias, for it relates the existence of evil to a lesser spiritual being than the supreme One Over All; it associates evil with matter; and, it levels a charge against the Old Testament Law and Prophets.

Simon's theology is also apparent here. It centers in his own person because he is the Being who is Father Over All. He is the Mind (noos, masculine) from which comes forth the Thought (ennoia, or epinoia, both feminine). Thought is begotten by the original One, or Mind educes himself from himself and makes manifest his own thought. The manifested thought beholds the Father, and hides him as the creative power within herself. The original power is to this degree drawn into the Thought, making an androgynous combination.

Simon's anthropology is, of course, directly influenced by his cosmogony. Although there is no direct statement, there is certainly the intimation that the activity of Ennoea's progeny of angels and powers resulted in a change for the worse. The necessity of Ennoea's being rescued from the earthy, material sphere, and the docetic emphasis of Simon's appearance speak very clearly of man's plight in his earthly body.

One further word for the category of Simon's anthropology can be gleaned from the Recognitions of Clement which puts the following words in Simon's mouth: "It is truly very difficult for men to know him as long as he is in the flesh; for blacker than all darkness, and heavier than all clay is this body with which the soul is surrounded."[8] And again, "The soul of men holds next place after God when set free from the darkness of the body."[9]

The angels also were at the bottom of an effort to increase man's bondage through inspiring the Old Testament prophets to produce the law. The soteriology of Simon in rescuing man from his predicament hints at the Christian doctrine of the incarnation. However, the purpose of his coming differs greatly from that of Christ in the New Testament. Simon imparted to men the knowledge of putting their trust in him. Quite Pauline-like he taught that man is saved by the grace of Simon, and not on account of his own acts of righteousness. The contrast, of course, is that it was not through a vicarious death on the part of Simon that salvation was based, but men through putting their trust in him were delivered from the law and became free to live as they pleased.[10]

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[8] Clement, The Recognitions of Clement, Vol. VIII of The Ante-Nicene Fathers, eds., Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (American reprint of the Edinburgh edition; Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., n.d.), II, 58.

[9] Ibid. II, 13.

The latter remark naturally suggests what Simon's teaching held for the category of morality. It was obviously antinomianism and the Old Testament and its law were rejected wholeheartedly. Men lived as they pleased!

Finally, in the area of eschatology, Irenaeus' account contains the very brief remark that the oppositions of the angels who created the world caused Simon to pledge himself to dissolve the world and free them who are his from the rule of these who made the world.[11]

2. Menander

Menander, according to Irenaeus, was also a Samaritan and the successor to Simon. His cosmogony was apparently an adaptation of Simon's, though he had some variations in other categories.

In his theology, Menander was sent to men as saviour, to replace it seems or at least to continue, to fill the place of Simon.

His soteriological scheme added a few new twists as well. Along with the knowledge of magical practices which enabled his disciples to overcome the "creating powers and evil angels," he taught a baptism in Menander which obtained for the disciple a resurrection and immortal youth.[12]

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[10] Iren. AH, I, 23.

[11] Ibid.

Positing a resurrection seems to imply an estimation of the body with which Simon would disagree. But this is only an implication which Irenaeus' brief account would not allow to be clarified.

3. Saturninus

The cosmogony of Saturninus who ministered in Syria, was for all practical purposes identical with those we have described to this point. There are some variations though. One of the created angels who was especially responsible for creating the world was the god of the Jews.

Though these same angels made man after their own image and likeness, he was, however, unable to walk and could only wiggle on the ground like a worm. The Primary Power took pity on him and sent forth a spark of life which enabled man to stand erect and live normally. At death the body of man decomposes into its original elements, and the spark returns to the sphere of the Primary Power.[13]

Saturninus' soteriological scheme teaches that Christ was without birth and without body, and yet appeared to be a visible man. His basic purpose in coming was to destroy the god of the Jews and to save good men. Precisely all that was involved in order to enjoy the salvation is not made clear by Irenaeus. Hippolytus adds that Saturninus taught that Christ came for the salvation of those that believe upon Him, but he also is not precise as to what he means.[14]

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[12] Ibid.

[13] Ibid., I, 24.

The category of morality under Saturninus may well imply an ascetic bent. Marriage and procreation are in his views that he received from the angel Satan. Irenaeus is not clear as to what relation Satan bears to the other angels.

A dualism which clearly rejects matter as evil is easily picked up in the concepts of Saturninus. Man's only dignity comes from a spark of the Primary Power. His body decomposes. Christ only appears to be a man and marriage and generations are from Satan.

4. Basilides

Basilides also adds several different and fascinating facets to the study of second century gnostics. His cosmogony presents one of them.

In an elaborate scheme, Basilides began with the unborn Father from whom Nous was born. From Nous came Logos, from Logos, Phronesis, from Phronesis came Sophia and

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[14] Hippolytus, The Refutation of All Heresies, Vol. V of The Ante-Nicene Fathers, eds., Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (American reprint of the Edinburgh edition; Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., n.d.), VII, 16. [Hereafter referred to as Hipp. RAH].

Dynamis, and from Dynamis and Sophia the powers, principalities and angels who were classified as the first. By these the first of a series of heavens was made, and then through emanations, other powers were formed that likewise made another heaven and so on. This pattern was carried out to 365 heavens in correlation with the number of days in the year. The angels in the lowest and visible heaven made the things in the world, and allotted among themselves the nations of the world. The chief among these angels was the god of the Jews. It was his desire to subject the other nations to his own people which brought resistance from the other angels and resulted in enmity with his nation.[15]

At this point, Basilides' soteriology is understood, for in order to avoid the destruction of His people, the unborn Father sent His first-begotten Nous (called also the Christ) to deliver those who believe on Him. Nous appeared on earth as a man. The Nous was able to transfigure Himself as He pleased, and consequently at His sentencing, a Simon of Cyrene was compelled to bear His cross by means of the transfiguration, and Jesus Who received Simon's form simply laughed at the efforts of their ignorance and error. The influence of all of this on his scheme of soteriology is quite significant. To confess the crucified one would be ignorance, and the one who did so was a slave under the power of those who formed man's body. Salvation instead was a matter of gaining the knowledge of the names of the principle angels and powers of the 365 heavens, and then offering the name of Caulacau, the name in which the Saviour ascended and descended. The one who learned this was rendered invisible and incomprehensible to the angels and powers even as Caulacau was. This, of course, allowed Him to pass through the heavens to the unknown Father.[16]

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[15] Iren. AH, I, 24.

The multitude generally was incapable of such understanding. Perhaps only one in a thousand, or two in ten thousand were able to attain this knowledge; thus the mysteries were usually kept secret through silence.[17]

Basilides' eschatology, according to Hippolytus, rested on the foundation of Aristotelianism,[18] and as such contained his view of entelechy (entelecheia). Just as Aristotle taught that the latent potential of matter developed along special lines in order to realize its particular form, or entelechy, so Basilides saw the gnostics attaining their intended spiritual potential. Their experience on earth was to rectify, mold, and complete their souls. When all of them attained their potential, a sort of termination, or culmination plateau was reached in which God would bring upon the whole world enormous ignorance. This would cause all things to continue according to nature, and nothing would inordinately desire any of the things contrary to nature. There would be no rumour or knowledge in the regions below concerning beings whose dwelling was above. Consequently, subjacent souls would not be wrung with torture from longing after impossibilities.[19]

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[16] Ibid., cf. also Hipp. RAH, VII, 14.

[17] Iren. AH, I, 24.

[18] Hipp. RAH II, III, V, VI, VII, VIII, IX.

5. Carpocrates

The cosmogony of Carpocrates was largely identical to those already discussed. In his doctrines of Christology and soteriology, however, there are some interesting variations.

Jesus was the son of Joseph, and was just like other men, with the exception that He differed from them in that inasmuch as His soul was steadfast and pure, He perfectly remembered those things which He had witnessed within the sphere of the unbegotten God. Here are shades of Platonism. Because of this, a power descended upon Him from the Father which enabled Him to escape from the creators of the world, by passing through them and ascending to the powers which embraced like things to themselves.

The basic premise in the soteriological scheme seemed to rest upon the need for experiencing every kind of life and action while in the body, so that when nothing was any longer wanting, as Irenaeus puts it, the soul was liberated and soared upward. Judging from Irenaeus' description, this "experience" is evidently characterized by antinomianism. He says regarding the followers of Carpocrates:

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[19] Ibid., VII, 15.

> They practice also magical arts and incantations; philters, also love-potions; and have recourse to familiar spirits, dream-sending demons, and other abominations, declaring that they possess power to rule over, even now, the princes and formers of this world; and not only them, but also all things that are in it . . . they lead a licentious life, and to conceal their impious doctrines, they abuse the name of Christ as a means of hiding their wickedness . . . So unbridled is their madness, that they declare they have in power all things which are irreligious and impious, and are at liberty to practice them; for they maintain that things are evil or good, simply in virtue of human opinion. (ANF 1: 350-351).[20]

Transmigration made it possible for the laggards not to lose out, and Irenaeus seems to indicate that eventually all achieve the desired end. The accomplished, or sincere disciples, needed only one incarnation, but others, "by passing from body to body; are set free, on fulfilling and accomplishing what is requisite in every form of life into which they are sent, so that at length they shall no longer be shut up in the body."[21] This seems to be a form of universalism.

The foundation of this view seems to assume that the world-creating angels are inferior and that the souls of men are from the superior sphere of the unbegotten God. Jesus, though trained in the practices of the Jews, regarded these things with contempt, and for that reason was endowed with faculties by means of which He destroyed the passions which dwell in men as a punishment for their sins. In a similar way others can find this deliverance. Indeed, some claimed they attained the same degree of perfection as Christ, and others laid claim to a superiority of the apostles. A strong rejection of the material world is manifest here through a thorough-going antinomianism.

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[20] Iren. AH, I, 25.

[21] Ibid.

6. Cerinthus and Marcion

Cerinthus' cosmogony was also largely in agreement with the previous positions presented. His Christology is also very similar to that of Carpocrates. He added, however, that at Jesus' baptism the Christ descended upon Him in the form of a dove. Following this He proclaimed the unknown Father and performed miracles. Just before Jesus' crucifixion, the Christ, inasmuch as He was a spiritual being, departed from Him so that only Jesus suffered.[22]

From what Irenaeus has said, we learn that Marcion held the god of the Old Testament to be the author of evil and one who delighted in error. Hippolytus, in a more elaborate description of Marcion's cosmogony and theology, was persuaded that he had imbibed too deeply of Empedocles' teaching and attributed to Marcion a full-fledged dualism. According to him Marcion held to an evil god, Discord, and a good god, Friendship, both unbegotten and eternal. Change was held to be a process wherein Friendship made unity out of plurality, but Discord was engaged in a reversal of the process. Friendship was, of course, associated with God, and Discord was the Demiurge and creator of the world, having the usual association with the god of the Old Testament.[23]

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[22] Ibid., I, 26.

Souls were severed from unity, by Discord, and then fashioned by him. They experienced transfigurations, being altered and punished by Discord. When they were detested and tormented in this world, they were collected by Friendship and attained unto unification. He implies this doctrine in his morality and ethics. Because of the state of their nature, marriage, procreation and eating meats were all to be avoided in order to prevent any cooperation whatever with Discord's dissolving and fabricating of souls.

As one would expect, the incarnation of the New Testament was not acceptable to Marcion. That the Logos should in any way have been associated with Discord was unthinkable. Independent of birth, the Logos descended in the fifteenth year of Tiberius as an intermediate between the good and bad deity. This position necessitated his liberation from the nature of the good God as well as that of the Bad One. Had not Jesus said, "Why call ye me good? there is one good." (Matt. 19:17; Mk. 10:18; Lk. 18:19)? He appeared to hold to a distinction between Christ who was sent by the good God and Christ who came as the Messiah predicted by the Old Testament. It was the supreme, good God, unknown to the Creator-God and to his creatures, who sent Christ to save man from the Creator. He assumed human form, eating, drinking, etc., much the same as the angels who appeared to Abraham.[24] As one scholar has put it, Marcion accepted the fact of God manifest among men, but not God incarnate among men.[25] The predicted Messiah of the Old Testament was indeed to come and establish his millennial rule, but Marcion recognized no relationship between him and the Christ from the good God. All seem to agree that Marcion's decided contrast with much of what we have already discussed in the soteriologies of other men was his emphasis on salvation by the grace of God through faith in Christ.

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[23] Hipp. RAH, VII, 17-19.

The other factors give us some insight into his views of morality and eschatology. Because of his concept of the Old Testament creator, responsible for man as He is, marriage and procreation were rejected as smacking of the extension of his program. And, as one would anticipate, any concept of a bodily resurrection had no place in his system of thought.[26]

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[24] Tertullian, Against Marcion, Vol. III of The Ante-Nicene Fathers, eds., Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (American reprint of the Edinburgh edition; Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1951), III, 9.

[25] J. P. Arendzen, "Marcionites," The Catholic Encyclopedia, Charles Herbermann, et. al., ed., 1910, IX, 646.

[26] Hipp. RAH, VII, 17.

7. The Ophites and Sethians

Probably the most unique contribution of the Ophites and Sethians was their cosmogony. According to Irenaeus, they held that originally in the power called Bythus existed a certain light, the Father of all, who was called the First Man. From him went Ennoea which produced a son, the son of man, also called the Second Man. Next in line down was the Holy Spirit. The First Man and His Son delighted in the beauty of the Spirit, shed light upon her and by her begot a third male, Christ. From these there then derived a Hebdomad of powers. The first of these was named Ialdoboath. He produced sons apart from any of the others' permission, and in his pride boasted unknowingly that he was Father and God. Ialdoboath called to the other powers to "Come, let us make man after our image," and man was brought into being. Ialdoboath breathed into man the spirit of life. Unbeknown to him, however, this was part of a plan of the other powers to empty Ialdaboath of his power, and remove him as a threat of his lifting himself above them. In a counter-move, however, Ialdaboath planned to empty man by means of a woman, and he produced Eve. The other powers fell in love with her, and begot sons by her. These were in reality angels. Sophia, another name for the Holy Spirit, again moved to foil Ialdaboath by seducing Adam and Eve through the serpent. Their disobedience resulted in their being cast out of Paradise to the earth. Coming to this world, their bodies, which had been "light, spiritual, bodies," became "opaque, gross and sluggish." The serpent also being cast into earth begat six sons himself, producing a Hebdomad similar to that surrounding the Father. Through this Hebdomad, he persuaded Adam and Eve to engage in every kind of wickedness. Ialdaboath's strategy now was to choose Abraham, making a covenant promise to him if he and his seed would worship Ialdaboath. Later Ialdaboath brought about the impregnation of Mary; Mary called upon the Holy Spirit who begged the First Man to send Christ to her assistance. In his descent through the seven heavens, Christ assumed the likeness of the sons of each sphere, gradually emptying them of their power. Jesus, begotten of a virgin, being wiser and finer than other men became the one on earth into whom the Christ descended. Jesus then began to work miracles and announce the unknown Father, and to confess himself as the Son of the First Man. This angered the father of Jesus, and plans were made to destroy him. Christ, however, departed from Jesus before his crucifixion and later sent a certain energy to him from above which raised him up again. The mundane parts of his body were sent back to earth. In heaven, Christ sat at the right hand of Ialdaboath (?) where he receives the souls of those who have known Christ. In proportion as he enriches himself with these holy souls, to such an extent does Ialdaboath suffer loss and is diminished. The consummation of all things will take place when the whole besprinkling of light of the aeons among men is gathered together and is carried off to form an incorruptible aeon.[27]

The elaborate and more fanciful character of this cosmogany and the ensuing implication which comes from it are easily recognized. The account reveals the typical gnostic elements of a basic rejection of the Old Testament and its Creator-God who is responsible for man's nature, and state of affairs; the unknown God being revealed through Christ; salvation as power over the inferior gods as one released from his material body is able to ascend through the seven heavens; and an ultimate regathering of the divine elements scattered through the ignorance of the inferior gods.

8. Valentinus

Turning to a survey of Valentinus will also serve as a transition into the Nag Hammadi texts, some of which are believed by some scholars to represent the actual writings of Valentinus. Though others are not willing to grant that much, they nevertheless acknowledge some of the materials as Valentinian.

Valentinus, according to Irenaeus, maintained that in the invisible and ineffable heights alone there exists a perfect, pre-existent aeon variously named Proarche, Propater and Bythus, and was alone capable of comprehending his Father's greatness. Nous, also called Monogenes, then became the beginning of all things.

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[27] Iren. AH, I, 30.

Aletheia was then produced after Nous, and the first tetrad was formed: Bythus and Sige, Nous and Aletheia.

The first Ogdad was composed when Nous then sent forth Logos and Zoe who in turn produced Anthropos and Ecclesia.

Logos and Zoe produced another ten aeons: Bythinus and Mixis (deep and mingling), Ageratos and Henosis (undecaying and reunion), Autophyes and Hedon (self-existent and pleasure), Acinetos and Syncrasis (immovable and blending), and Monogenes and Macaria (only begotten and happiness).

Anthropos and Ecclesia then produced twelve aeons resulting in a total of thirty aeons altogether.[28]

The source of material substance from these aeons came about in the following manner. The youngest of the offspring of Anthropos and Ecclesia, Sophia, suffered the passion of desiring to search into the nature of the Father. Having engaged in an impossible attempt, she brought about an amorphous substance,[29] "such as her female nature enabled her to produce" (alluding to the gnostic notion that in generation the male gives the form). Sophia, as female, gave to her enthymesis (conception) substance only.[30] Grieved at the imperfection of her activity, Sophia attempted to return to the Father but strength failed her.

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[28] Ibid., I, 1.

[29] Ibid., I, 2; cf. also Hipp. RAH, VII, 25.

[30] Roberts and Donaldson, The Ante-Nicene Fathers, I, 317, footnote 4.

Material substance, then, had its beginning from ignorance, grief, fear and bewilderment.

The Pleroma, however, is purged of this substance when the Father produced Horos, also termed Statauros (stake), Lytrotes (a redeemer), Carpistes (emancipator), Horothetes (one that fixes boundaries), and Metagoges (one that brings back) who purified Sophia, and expelled her enthymesis (reflections) with its passion from the pleroma. This enthymesis they referred to as Achamoth.[31]

With the pleroma restored to normality, the Father gave origin to Christ and the Holy Spirit, and through their instruction to the pleroma peace and rest came about. In gratitude for this, the pleroma produced for the honor and glory of Bythus a being of perfect beauty, the star of the pleroma, Jesus who also possessed the various names of Saviour, Christ, Logos and Everything.[32] This Christ had pity on Achamoth, and imparted form to him, withholding, however, intelligence (the gnosis regarding the Father which had been communicated to the other aeons).[33]

Having Achamoth now, Sophia became sensitive to her sufferings of being severed from the pleroma, and strained to discover the light which had forsaken her. Unable to do so, she resigned herself to every sort of passion, suffering grief because she had not obtained her desire and fearing lest life itself should fail even as the light had done. These feelings, it was taught by Valentinus, were due to the innate opposition of nature to knowledge.

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[31] Iren. AH, I, 4.

[32] Ibid., I, 2.

[33] Ibid., I, 4.

Unable to escape, and suffering a wide array of passions, she turned to Christ who, though He was unwilling to descend from the pleroma, sent her the Paraclete who was endowed by the Father and aeons to rule over everything.

The Paraclete imparted intelligence to her, and separated her passions from her, but could not annihilate them for they had by now acquired strength. He was, however, able to bring about a two-fold concentration of them into substances: one, evil, resulting from passions; and, the other, from her conversion, that which was subject to suffering. A third kind came into existence when Achamoth, freed from her passion, gazed with rapture on the dazzling vision of angels, and in her ecstacy conceived by them new beings partly her own image and partly the spiritual progeny of the Saviour's attendants. Three kinds of existence had now been formed: one from passion which was matter; a second from conversion, which was animal; and a third from Achamoth herself which was spiritual.[34]

Achamoth formed out of the animal substance he who was the father of everything outside of the pleroma, the creator of all animal and material substance as well as incorporeal substances--heavenly and earthly. This Demiurge who was merely animal substance, was ignorant of the existence even of Achamoth, and imagined himself responsible for all things. Valentinus taught that this was exactly how Isaiah 45:5-6; 46:9 was to be understood - "I am God, and besides me there is none else."[35] This Demiurge was the creator of the devil (known by the Valentinians as the Cosmocrater), and the wicked spiritual beings. Earthly man also had his origin through the craft of the Demiurge who made him from an invisible substance, and breathed into him animal life. Unbeknown to the Demiurge, however, Achamoth also fitted man for the reception of perfect rationality, consequently, man possessed body, soul and spirit.

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[34] Ibid., I, 5, 7.

This view of man eventually developed into a threefold division of mankind: the material men who ultimately end in corruption; the animal men who, if they choose properly, attain to an intermediate state above this world which is doomed for destruction; and the spiritual men who ultimately enter the pleroma as brides of the angels of the Saviour. The Saviour, as an intermediate between the material and the spiritual, received from the Demiurge a body of animal nature, and he received from Achamoth also a spiritual part. In his descent to the earth, he passed through Mary, "just as water flows through a tube."[36] His time on earth was free from all suffering. He was the source for men receiving the knowledge of the true state of reality.

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[35] All Biblical quotations are taken from the Revised Standard Version unless otherwise indicated.

[36] Iren. AH, I, 6, 7.

The spiritual among men are, of course, those who respond to the Saviour's ministry, and through knowledge gained from Him attain unto perfection. Salvation, then, is knowledge which has little or no relation to conduct. Being spiritual it is impossible for them to even come under the power of corruption or lose their spiritual substance no matter in what actions they may be involved in the material sphere. The moral outcome of such belief, according to Irenaeus, was the most hypocritical and blatant antinomianism.[37]

When all the spiritual men have attained to the perfect knowledge of God and all that is spiritual has been formed and perfected through gnosis, then the perfect will pass into the pleroma with their mother Achamoth. As she there receives the Saviour as her spouse, so the perfect are divested of their animal souls and become intelligent spirits who are bestowed as brides to those angels waiting on the Saviour. At this time even the Demiurge is advanced to the intermediate state where Achamoth had been. He is joined there by the souls of the righteous, and the remaining material world will then be destroyed by a blazing fire which presently lies hidden in the world.[38]

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[37] Ibid., I, 6.

[38] Ibid., I, 7.

9. Summary from Material of Church Fathers

Introductory paragraph. As we originally acknowledged, the accounts in many instances have not been sufficiently complete to show what each school of thought taught in all of the chosen categories. In some instances it has been possible only to imply what likely was held. Nevertheless, some basic concepts can be recognized as running through the beliefs of these groups, and from these some of the background can be sketched for an estimation of first century Gnosticism.

a. Summary of Cosmogonies

The cosmogonies present a distinct pattern with slight variations. There was inevitably a First Power of some description who was the ultimate source of all things. Various names were assigned to this power: for Simon, Father over all; for Menander, the Primary Power. Saturninus referred to him as the One unknown to all; Basilides called him the Unborn Father; to Carpocrates he was the Unbegotten God; Cerinthus spoke of him as the Supreme Ruler; in Marcion's scheme there was Friendship and Discord; the Ophites and Sethians referred to the First Man the Father of All; and Valentinus spoke of Proarche, Propater, or Bythus.

Associated in some way with the First Power was a hierarchy of more or less elaborate lesser powers. Simon presented a relatively simple one of Ennoea comprehending Simon's will and generating angels and powers who in turn formed the world. For Saturninus a company of seven angels was brought into being by the One Unknown to All, while Basilides' view was essentially that some company which he labelled "the first" went on to develop via emanations a series of 365 powers of progressively lesser dynamic. Marcion's dualistic pattern was more sophisticated because of the influence from Empedocles. The Ophites and Sethians view showed a closer orientation to the Old Testament with the Father of All, or First Man, the Holy Spirit, or First woman, producing Christ, the Second Man, and then moving, however, to a Hebdomad of lesser powers for which there was also a corresponding Hebdomad of evil powers. From Valentinus' Bythus eventually thirty aeons came into existence.

In the relationship of these hierarchies there was some accounting for the presence of evil in the nature of things. The origin of evil itself was, as in the Genesis account, not ultimately dealt with but simply attributed in some way to the action of one or more members of the lesser hierarchy. Simon's creating angels possessed a desire to retain the Ennoea which seems an obvious parallel to the taking of the fruit from the tree and coming to _know_ good and evil.[39] The origin of this desire was ignored by Simon, but it was initiated at a level far below the Father of All.

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[39] Genesis 2:9 . . . _to xulon tou eidenai gnoston kalou kai ponerou_; 2:17 . . . _tou xulou tou ginoskein kalon kai poneron_; 3:6 . . . _hos theoi ginoskontes kalon kai poneron_. (Septuagint)

The inference is strong that the cause of evil is associated with matter. In Menanders' doctrine, the cause of evil was inferred from his soteriology. The fact that the knowledge of magical practices was essential to overcome the creating-angels and attain to the Father seems to locate the cause for man's dilemma in the hierarchy. The inability of Saturninus' company of seven angels to properly create man with the consequent need for the One Power to infuse a spark of life in him, again associated the problem of evil with the hierarchy and the body of matter which they created. Similarly, Basilides' view of emanations placed a considerable distance between the Unknown Father and the angels of the lowest world who created the material objects, and who numbered among them the god of the Jews whose desire to subjugate the nations was the seed of disunity and enmity in heaven and earth. The Ophite-Sethian view of the Hebdomad presented Ialdaboath whose pride and ignorance made him claim the position of Father and God.[40]

The origin and sinfulness of man were the consequence of his persistence in being recognized as supreme before the other members of the Hebdomad. Amongst the 30 aeons of Valentinus, Sophia suffered the passion of desiring to search into the nature of the Father resulting eventually in the origin of material substance. Evil then was the responsibility of some lesser spiritual being, usually associated with matter, and was on the opposite end of the spectrum from pure spirit.

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[40] Iren. AH, I, 30.

b. Summary of Anthropologies

The anthropology of Simon was largely inferred. What kind of moral product could gods bring into being who were themselves of such a nature as to detain Ennoea by enshrouding her in a human body and then abusing her? Certainly to possess a body was an undesirable quality. Man's ascent from this world and its eventual dissolution likewise bear witness to the character of his spiritual environment. The picture of man's nature and state drawn by Saturninus also attributed the flaw of a material body to inferior gods whose bungling was modified only by the intervention of the Primary Power's infusion of the spark of life. Man could only be destined to the conflict of spirit and matter.

In Basilides, the limitations of the creating gods who are 364 heavens distant from the Unborn Father were manifest in the imperfection of the world they brought into being, part of which was man with a body. That body finds no place in Basilides scheme of salvation which was for the soul alone.[41]

Similarly for Carpocrates, it was the soul alone which ascends leaving its prison body behind with the inferior gods who made it. Marcion also maintained that inferior gods gave man a body which was taken from the earth and therefore incapable of salvation.[42]

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[41] Ibid., I, 24.

[42] Ibid., I, 25.

The Ophite-Sethian doctrine likewise posited a material body of inferior value and a spiritual part of divine origin that will ultimately be regathered to the Father of All. Valentinus added a new facet, teaching that man's nature was tripartite. All three parts ultimately stemmed from Sophia's passion of desire to search into the nature of the Father. Only two aspects, the equivalent of spirit and soul, were in this view redeemable, the third, equivalent to the material body, was doomed for destruction.

An analytic summary of the anthropologies of these various schools would naturally begin with the obvious conflict man has in the material and spiritual aspects of his nature. This was accounted for through attributing evil to matter. Man's constitution of a material body and his natural state in a world of matter conflict with the heavenly, spiritual part of him. His nature and state, however, are not of his own making, but are rather due to the flaw in the Demiurge responsible for this creation. The Demiurge simply was limited because of his degree of separation from the pur-spirit-state of the Primary Power. Consequently, he was ignorant of his own true state, and was seized by a desire to attain to what he was by his very nature unable to comprehend, at least for the present.

c. Summary of Soteriologies

Man is in a dilemma which is the consequence of some inferior spiritual being. How is he to be delivered out of it?

In Simon's teaching, he personally assumes the appearance of a man and saved men who followed him.[43] Menander, as we have seen, simply replaced Simon, while Saturninus taught that Christ became the emissary of the One Power, and Basilides, closely following him, held that the First Begotten Nous appeared on earth as a man. In Carpocrates' system a power from the Father descended on the man Jesus, and Cerinthus, in a position nearly identical to this, had the Christ descend on Jesus at His baptism, and then proclaim the unknown Father. Marcion's logos is rather unique, the product of Discord, and the nature of the Good One, yet distinct as a truly intermediate being separate from a body. The Ophite-Sethian doctrine returned to the theme of the man Jesus as the instrument of the influence of the descended Christ, and Valentinus has the Paraclete descend from the pleroma. There was then characteristically the descent of some member of the hierarchy to aid man.

Can we discern any common pattern or factor in the message and/or method of deliverance brought by the descending hierarchy? Simon's message was that men should place their trust in him and Helena, and thereby become free to live as they please. Their freedom delivered them from the prophets of the Old Testament and the god who through the law was trying to keep men in bondage. Menander, of course, replaced Simon as the object of faith and also offered the magical knowledge for foiling the angels that made the world. Saturninus taught the descent of Christ for the destruction of the god of the Jews, and the salvation of those believing in Christ. Both Irenaeus' and Hippolytus' accounts are vague regarding the precise expression of that faith and the form of salvation. There was likewise an asceticism based on the evil of matter. Basilides' soteriology called for learning the names of the heavens and their powers, plus the secret name used by Christ in His descent. It clearly rejected the Christian doctrine of the incarnation and atoning death of Christ. Carpocrates' views were extremely antinomian, calling for the transmigration of the soul to enable men sufficient opportunity to experience deliverance from the law of the makers of this world. Marcion also taught a transmigration of souls but in contrast to Carpocrates' antinomianism called for an asceticism. Christ's descent into Hades was the means of delivering those who had rebelled against the god of the Jews in his system. Finally, Valentinus' plan called for knowledge gained from Christ to enable some to attain perfection.

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[43] There is an interesting resemblance to the Johannine claim for the Logos as described in John 1:1, ". . . kai theos en ho logos," and in 1:14, "kai ho logos sarx egeneto kai eskenosen en hemin . . ."

There are three distinct factors which a review of these teachings reveals. For several, the need to believe in an individual as saviour is essential, though probably more for what he teaches about "the way" than for what he does in the believer as in the New Testament. There is in all of them a deliverance from this world. It is expressed in one of two ways: 1) in an asceticism which shuns cooperation with the god responsible for this evil material world; 2) in an antinomianism which understands law not as a moral order come from a good source, but from an ignorant or evil (or both) god who attempts to captivate man through it. Evil is in the world as a consequence of the god's creation; man is as he is naturally. The creating gods are responsible for his nature, and attempt to use the law to keep him in subjection. Salvation seems to connote a freedom from the frustration of the moral and ethical dilemma man finds himself in by the rejection of a standard as a relative thing imposed by the gods. It seems to sweep away the reality of Paul's Romans chapter seven, and Plutarch's " . . . two-fold nature and dissimilarity of the very soul within itself". . .[44] by eliminating a standard, and justifying man's failure as simply the nature of things. Finally, there is the need for the gnosis. Sometimes it is quite simple, a matter of following the right teacher. Sometimes it is more secretive and complicated, calling for the secret names of the heavens, and the key word for ascent through them and the power of the gods who rule over them.

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[44] Plutarch, Moralia, Vol. VI of The Loeb Classical Library, W. C. Helmbold trans. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962), 25.

d. Summary of the Moralities

The moral views of the various gnostic groups fall into two basic classifications: those who are ascetics, and those who are antinomian.

Simon Magus falls into the latter of these classifications. Saved by grace through him and Helena, men were free to live as they pleased. As Simon was enamoured by Helena and "enjoyed her person," so those who followed him "indulge in similar practices, and irrationally allege the necessity of promiscuous intercourse . . . They congratulate themselves on account of this indiscriminate intercourse, asserting that it is perfect love, and employing the expressions, 'holy of holies' and 'sanctify one another.' For they would have us believe that they are not overcome by the supposed vice, for they have been redeemed."[45] The views of Saturninus were quite the contrary. Celibacy and abstinence from sexual intercourse were both practiced because of the belief that marriage and generation were instituted by Satan for the promulgating of his material world. Abstinence of meat eating was rooted in the same belief. Irenaeus does not allude to the practices of Basilides. Hippolytus makes the brief comment that Basilides follows Aristotle not only in his doctrines of a cosmical system, but also in ethical subject," . . . not in spirit alone, but also in actual expressions and names, transferring the tenets of Aristotle into our evangelical and saving doctrine.[46] That would certainly dismiss any charge of antinomianism against him. Clement would bear witness to that conclusion with his remark that Basilides taught that not all sins were forgiven, but " . . . only sins involuntary and in ignorance are forgiven."[47] Carpocrates, however, held an extreme antinomian position. On the premise that the world was created by angels greatly inferior to the unbegotten Father, reaction to them and their laws was nothing short of despite. Transmigration for him presented every opportunity to experience moral rebellion against the angel world-makers. Marcion's views called for an asceticism. In the nature of things, evil is due to Discord with whom those of Friendship had no connection at all. Marcion believed that abstaining from things made by Discord and the order he imposed on his creation was to oppose the creator. The body, then, had no place in salvation, and marriage was "destruction." As Clement put it, "By way of opposition to the Demiurge, Marcion rejects the use of the things of this world."[48]

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[45] Iren. AH, I, 23.

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[46] Hipp. RAH, VII, 7.

[47] Clement, Stromata, Vol. II of The Ante-Nicene Fathers, eds., Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (American reprint of the Edinburgh edition; Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. n.d.), IV, 24.

[48] Ibid., III, 4.

The nature of man and the state of his world are matter by creation and consequently evil. It is by nature contrary to the best interests of man, and man cannot change this, but only oppose it. This the gnostics did, violating the law of the one they believed was responsible for the frustrating order, or refusing steadfastly to, in any way, be responsible for the advance of the order.

e. Summary of the Eschatologies

The eschatological views of Simon are extremely simple. The nature of the world as created by the bungling angels demanded that ultimately the order be eradicated, and so, according to Irenaeus, Simon pledged to himself that the world should be dissolved, and those who are his should be freed from the rule of them who made the world.[49] Menander adds another facet, claiming that his disciples obtain a resurrection by being baptized into him.[50]

Basilides added an interesting change of pace. When eventually all gnostics attained their spiritual potential, God instituted a state of ignorance upon the rest of men. This resulted in the imperfect ceasing to long for what was impossible for them to know.

Carpocrates' view would also seem to infer an eventual culmination of things. When each one had run the gamut of antinomianism, either by skillfully succeeding in one lifetime, or through transmigration succeeding later, the soul soared to God. From Hippolytus' comment regarding their doctrine, ". . . and in this way all souls shall be saved,"[51] it would seem there will be a time when man and his basic state will no longer be as it is now. The Ophites and Sethians taught a similar view when they spoke of a time when the whole besprinkling of light would be gathered together and carried off to form an incorruptible aeon. Finally, Valentinus' teaching contained the idea of a consummation when the spiritual enter the pleroma and were bestowed as brides on the angels who waited upon the Saviour; the Demiurge and psychic men were granted a place in the intermediate habitation; and the world and all matter were destroyed by fire. The eschatologies, then, generally call for the deliverance of at least the chosen from the material world which is then usually destroyed. Some, however, once the faithful are delivered, seem to pay little attention to the ultimate destiny of matter.

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[49] Iren. AH, I, 23.

[50] Ibid.

B. From Materials in the Nag Hammadi Texts

In addition to the materials in the early fathers of the Church, there is now available to us writings of the gnostics themselves. Approximately in 1945, a library of 13 papyrus codices, most of which are apparently substantially complete, was discovered at Chenoboskion, near

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[51] Hipp. RAH, VII, 20.

Nag Hammadi, Egypt.[52] Written in Coptic, they were "in most cases, perhaps all,"[53] translated from a Greek original. Eleven are complete with bindings, and two are represented only by a few scattered leaves from each. These 13 codices contain 49 various writings or titles of which 44 are hitherto unknown.[54] Doresse classifies them as follows: 1) the revelation of great prophets of Gnosticism from Seth to Zoroaster; 2) gnostic writings disguised as Christian; 3) Gospels of Christianized Gnosticism; 4) and materials of Hermes Trismegistus as an ally of Gnosticism.[55] From these 49, we will concentrate on two, The Gospel of Truth and The Gospel of Thomas. The limitation of the study to these sources is based first of all on the general inaccessibility of the materials to scholars for study; second, of the materials available, it has been these which have had the careful and wider attention given them, and, consequently, have evoked discussion and articles which enable more substantial judgments of the significance of the materials in relation to this study. Finally, in the judgment of scholars these are more directly related to early Christianity in time and thought.

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[52] Kendrick Grobel, The Gospel of Truth (New York: Abingdon Press, 1960), pp. 7-8. [Hereafter referred to as TGT].

[53] Ibid, p. 9.

[54] Jean Doresse, The Secret Books of the Egyptian Gnostics (New York: The Viking Press, 1960), p. 137.

[55] Ibid., p. 146.

1. The Gospel of Truth

Many scholars think that The Gospel of Truth may very well be the work of Valentinus himself. Quispel, for example writes, "That The Gospel of Truth comes from the school of Valentinus, the most important gnostic of c. A.D. 90-160, there is not the least doubt."[56] The opinion that it embodies, reflects a stage in the development of doctrine prior to the division of Valentinianism into different schools, which means it must be very old and was probably written about 150 A.D.

Grobel is convinced that Valentinus wrote it,[57] and Van Unnik admits that, "as things stand at present, one cannot state with certainty that Valentinus himself is the author of The Gospel of Truth," but he then goes on to say, "After comparing it with later developments in doctrine, I believe it possible to conclude that it can indeed be attributed to the master himself: and that he must have written it in Rome, at some time before his break with the 'Great Church.'"[58] Analysts of the Jung Codex, Quispel and Puech, consider this hypothesis as not unlikely, but emphasize that for the present it is still a supposition.[59]

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[56] F. L. Cross, ed., The Jung Codex (London: A. R. Mowbray & Co., Limited, 1955), p. 40.

[57] Grobel, TGT, pp. 14-19.

[58] W. C. Van Unnik, Newly Discovered Gnostic Writings (Naperville, Ill.: Alec R. Allenson, Inc., 1960), (Studies in Biblical Theology No. 30), pp. 62-63.

[59] Cross, The Jung Codex, p. 50.

Several factors to consider when questioning his authorship are: ~~First,~~ Irenaeus' account of Valentinus is three times removed from Valentinus himself, (1. the account of Irenaeus himself; 2. the information of anonymous disciples of Ptolemy; 3. the account of Ptolemy himself who had been a pupil of Valentinus). Secondly, the general tendency of the gnostic movement from the second to the fourth centuries was one toward a more daring speculation and vivid mythology;[60] consequently, one would expect to find Valentinus as an earlier gnostic holding a position nearer to Christian orthodoxy.

It has been suggested that there were three stages in Valentinus' experience: 1) Valentinus as the Catholic-Christian, though with a tendency to daring expression; 2) the bizarre Christian of doubtful acceptability to the Great Church; and, 3) Valentinus the brilliant heretic, a speculative gnostic but nevertheless closer to the Church's teaching than even Ptolemy or Heracleon.[61] It may very well be that this last stage consisted of a greater step away from orthodoxy, than is suggested by Grobel's statement, and that Irenaeus' account is not so inaccurate as may at first be judged.

At any rate, the possibility that The Gospel of Truth was written by Valentinus is considered as extremely likely by many scholars, and is important to our study of materials closely linked with the early Church and early second century gnostics.

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[60] Grobel, TGT, pp. 14-15.

[61] Ibid., p. 16.

Let us then turn to this document and apply the categories we have been using for guidelines in our study.

a. Regarding Cosmogany

In an analysis of The Gospel of Truth one cannot miss the contrast with much of what we have studied in the views of Simon and the others regarding cosmogony. The elaborate mythological schemes are conspicuous by their absence. The state of nature is spoken of as the Totality (17:15), and is simply said to have been "within" and "emerged" from the Incomprehensible One (17:6-10). Another reference states: "Thus all MAEIT which are also in the Father are from Him who is, who set him on his feet (established him) from that which is not." (28:11-16) The word MAEIT is a technical term which Grobel consistently allows to stand untranslated, awaiting further evidence. Its meaning varies from "way, path, road, place."[62] There are other times, and this in Grobel's mind is one of them, that it may also mean "creature," or "created thing (including persons)." It is in the light of that possibility that Grobel adds in a note on 28:11-16, "Creatio ex nihilo in a gnostic writing."[63]

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[62] Ibid., p. 65.

[63] Ibid., p. 115.

In the early state, however, when it emerged from the Father, there was an air of "not-knowing-the-Father" which became an "anguish and a terror; and the anguish condensed like a fog so that none could see." (17:10-14) Exactly how this air came to be is not clear, though 18:1 plainly states that, "the forgetting did not arise under the hand of the Father, though it did arise because of Him."

There then follows a reference to one *Plane* who ". . . set to work upon her *substance* . . . in her ignorance of the Truth. She was at work upon a *molded figure* preparing as best as she could with beauty the substitute for the Truth." (17:15-20) Grobel believes that because of the predicates used for the expression *Plane* are curiously personal, the possibility must be allowed to understand her as a hypostasis or a downright mythical person.[64] The word literally means, "wondering, unguided roaming," and can also mean, "that which or she who causes to go astray, and figuratively, deceit."[65] Of *Plane's* origin we are ignorant. Her activity, however, shows her as "occupied with preparing labors (works to be done, tasks, difficulties) and forgettings and terrors, so that by means of them she might entice those-of-the-middle and take them captive." (17:31-35) This latter expression is an apparent reference to the *Psychikoi*.

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[64] Ibid., p. 43.

[65] Ibid., p. 43.

The Gospel of Truth also speaks of aeons. In the natural state of things, they do not know the Father either and this, as Grobel reminds us, is slightly different from Ptolemy's view in which at least Nous-Monogenes knows the Father.[66] There are no other allusions to them in the book, and we are left in ignorance as to their origin as well.

Finally, 24:22 contains a reference to the world as the Scheme--the place where there is envy and quarreling and where there is a gnosis of the Father, sometimes referred to as the "lack."

Admittedly there is a mythological air in the language used regarding cosmogony, it is, however, in contrast to character of the previous systems studied, being more comparable to Plato's use of myth.

The cosmogony confronts us with a state of nature possessing all the problems we have found in the other accounts. Like the others, there is the steadfast refusal to link the unfortunate situation of man in any casual way to the Incomprehensible God. It also resembles them by attributing a female super-being with the responsibility of the activity which is contrary to the purposes of the Incomprehensible One. There is also an allusion to matter as being in some way a part of the problem of the world state, but this will be referred to more fully under the anthropology.

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[66] Ibid., p. 95.

b. Regarding Theology

There are also points of contrast in the theology of The Gospel of Truth. To quote Grobel, "Where does this mediation (Valentinus' position) stand between orthodoxy and heterodoxy? Deity, far from being a thirty-fold complex a 'la Irenaeus, consists of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit."[67]

God is referred to as the Father of Truth (16:33), the Incomprehensible One (17:8), the Perfect One, and Him who created the totality, in whom the totality is (18:33-34), Father of the totality (20:19), Depth (40:28), the immeasurable Greatness (42:14), and the truly Good One (42:30). It is He, and not a demiurge who is creator of the universe. There is no being emanated from the Ineffable One who is Propater. Attributes and epithets occur as such and not as independent, mythical powers. There is a distinct impression created in my mind of His supreme rule over creation and its activities that is almost Pauline, or perhaps better, Biblically orthodox.

The Christology of The Gospel of Truth in no way comes out of a narrative as in the New Testament. It in fact contains "not a single story about Jesus, though it alludes to some," nor does it explicitly cite the words of Jesus. On the other hand, it is in distinct contrast to the geneology of aeons we have seen in the past. There is not even a suggestion of a split Son, a Jesus and a Christ, much less a heavenly and earthly Jesus and a heavenly and earthly Christ. He is the Father's beloved Son (30:31). In 16:34-35 and 37:8, the name Word is given to Him as One having come from the pleroma "who is in the thought and mind of the Father." He is called the Soter who redeems the agnostics (16:7). He is the "secret mystery" who through the Gospel has illuminated those in darkness (17:15). In the passage 20:10-21:1, "Jesus Suffers for the Book," there are allusions to the incarnation and resurrection which strongly suggest a docetic view - "He came forth in a flesh of (such) sort . . ."[68] There is also a strong allusion to John's Gospel chapter one, "he in (the) beginning (it was) who gave name to him who came out of Him, that one being Himself and who He begat as a Son," (38:8-10). This last passage suggests that the logos is with God and therefore distinct from Him, and also that He is God and therefore one with Him. The Christology, then, is quite distinct from the other accounts we have studied thus far, and in many ways approximates the New Testament accounts.

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[67] Ibid., p. 21.

The Holy Spirit, though present, does not play a prominent place in The Gospel of Truth. In 24:11, 26:36, and 27:4 reference is to the "bosom of the Father"; "His tongue means the Holy Spirit . . .," and similar language connoting the Father's revelation of Himself. There is no suggestion that the Pneuma is a female, as in the case of Ptolemy's system where Pneuma is the heavenly spouse of Christus.[69]

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[68] Grobel would also argue this possibility, cf. TGT, p. 123.

The theology then also appears to be of a somewhat different stripe than the previous groups we have surveyed. Still clinging to mythological language, though of a less imaginative character, there is nevertheless a godhead which is much more Biblically oriented. There is the ineffable Father; the Son who seems to be divine though there is real question as to his humanity; and the Holy Spirit, though in reference to Him, there appears to be no attribute of personality.

c. Regarding Anthropology

The view of man in The Gospel of Truth shows his natural state as a-gnostic (16:38-17:1). As part of the totality, he is searching after that from which he has emerged (17:5-7). In this state of not-knowing-the-Father, a state of anguish, fog-like so that none can see (17:10-14), man is the object of Plane's ploys as she endeavors through forgettings and terrors to entice the Psychikoi and capture them (17:30-36). In this state, he lacks completion which is alone in the Father. It is necessary for the totality to go upward to the Father, and for each person to receive the things that are his own(21:15-22).

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[69] Grobel, TGT, p. 23.

Man himself seems again to possess the basic fault of having a material aspect. In 31:1 man is referred to as Hyle which Grobel understands to be a collective which connotes those who are impervious to the Son's revelation of the Father in much the same way that the Gospel of John speaks of the world, those from below, or those of the devil.[70] In 34:5, those who are the redeemed of the Father are referred to as the Aroma, and the Aroma then are spoken of as "mingled with matter." In 34:19, it speaks of the agnostic as characterized by "animate mold." The word "animate" is believed to connote "anima"--that which has or is Anima; "mold" seems to mean "human nature," but not specifically the human body. One further observation, which is really inference from the reference to Christ's incarnation. "For He came forth in a flesh of sort," (31:4-5, emphasis mine). If this is a reference to Docetism, then obviously the Hyle may well possess an undesirable quality of matter.

To summarize the observations in anthropology, then, matter as evil is not as obvious as in the other accounts. Man finds himself in a state of ignorance of God, a state in which there is a force at work against a change in that knowledge. It is an anthropology which seems to be turned in the direction of the Biblical view.

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[70] Ibid., p. 123.

d. Regarding Soteriology

The category of soteriology is quite significant in *The Gospel of Truth*. Man's basic problem is ignorance of the Father and as a consequence he has a life described in the *Nightmare Parable* (28:29-30:11) as a terror, disturbance, instability, doubting and delusions. Deliverance from his forgetfulness of the Father, or a-gnosis, the basic cause of his problem, comes, of course, through gnosis, or knowing completeness in the Father (19:1, 4). It is also described as: receiving himself from the Father (21:6); returning to himself, awakening, having his eyes opened (30:14-15); and, becoming a son of the Father (33:39).

Man, naturally, cannot find this gnosis independently, and to meet this need the Father "unbosoms Himself" (24:9), so that He may be known. The toiling of searching for Him may end and rest may come as the lack is supplied, the Schema is destroyed, and the Reunion of completeness follows (24:20-30). The form in which all of this is accomplished is through the coming of Jesus who appears as a quiet and leisurely guide (19:17-18) speaking the Words as a teacher (19:20), of the Book of the Living (19:35) which He alone could take (20:5), and apart from which none could be saved (20:7-9). Jesus having taken the book and opening it, was nailed to a tree, fastening the testamentary from the Father to the cross (20:25-28).

Those who are taught are those whom the Father foreknew. He pronounces their name and they respond, turning to Him who called them (21:25-29; 22:5). This emphasis of election is quite strong in The Gospel of Truth, as the following passage illustrates:

> Nothing is want to happen without Him, nor is anything want to happen without the Father's will. But His will is not (pre-) determinable. His footprint (after Him) the will is, and none shall learn of it, none cause it to be spied out so that it might be grasped. But (at) the moment when He wills, what He wills, that--even if the sight please "them" not at all--is the will in the eyes of God. For the Father knows the beginning of them all and their end. (37:21-38:7)

Or again, "Consequently if one is a gnostic, he is from above. If he is called, he is want to heed, to respond, and to turn to Him who calls him, and go upward to Him." (22:2-7)

The Holy Spirit seems to find a place in the realization of gnosis, for we read regarding the conversion experience,

> They greeted (perhaps embraced) the Father in truth with a perfect power which unites them with the Father, for everyone who loves the truth attaches himself to the Father's mouth by means of his tongue as he receives the Holy Spirit, thus the revelation of the Father and the manifestation of Himself to His Eons.[71]

The one who has so come to gnosis now understands how he is called and wants to please the Father. He understands where he came from, and where he is going (22:14-15).

The soteriology is remarkably similar to the New Testament pattern. Man is in darkness, totally unable of himself to escape from his dilemma, and in need of deliverance. One is sent from above to bring him the truth. There is that working of God in his life enabling him as a predestined one to respond to the call, and finally with his response there is the possession of spiritual insight into the true state of nature, and ultimately deliverance from the very presence of this world.

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[71] Ibid., p. 48.

e. Regarding Morality

A judgment of the moral character called for in The Gospel of Truth is difficult to make. There is a significant and rather lengthy passage dominated by ethical imperatives, and this composes part of the problem. As Grobel points out, such ethical demand is " . . . astonishing in a gnostic work, for the gnostics are generally held to have been devoid of ethical concern."[72]

Then language calls for the reaching out to those who are sick, hungry, weary and sleepy. Valentinians are to be careful not to be concerned with things that they have cast out of themselves and left behind, and not to be a place for the devil to inhabit. They are to eliminate stumbling blocks from their lives (e.g. not to carry suits to the courts). They are to do the will of the Father.

Grobel suggests that perhaps the passage is more properly understood metaphorically,[73] that is that the rescuing of men is with the saving knowledge of salvation. Robert Wilson believes that his may be the answer also.[74] Much of the answer may very well hinge on the verb used in 33:8-9 which Grobel translates, "For you are that understanding that draws (or plucks out)."[75] If the Coptic word involved is taken as the equivalent of the Greek anspao, the passage would then read, "you are the wisdom (or understanding) that is drawn up,"[76] meaning that the gnostic as the spiritual one is waiting only the final consummation, and the expression would be exhortative in the sense that the sooner all the seed is perfected, the sooner the end would come, and the gnostic would be released from the bondage of the world. Wilson supports the reasonableness of this interpretation by quoting a parallel in Poimandres 26:

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[72] Ibid., p. 139.

[73] Ibid., pp. 140-141.

> Such is the blissful goal of those who possess knowledge - to become God. Why then do you delay? Now that you have received all things from me, should you not become a guide to those who are worthy, so that through you the race of mankind may be saved by God and thereupon the seer begins to preach to men the beauty of piety and of knowledge.

Grobel emphasizes that the context of the passage in The Gospel of Truth refers to the gnostics as sheep drawn up from the pit,[78] and Wilson states further that the Greek equivalent anaspao is used in a similar context in the Septuagint, Amos 9:2, and the New Testament, Luke 14:5.[79] The point here is the likelihood of the ethical expressions being properly understood as metaphorical expressions for the rescuing of men with the saving knowledge rather than their being understood as literal exhortations to ethical life.

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[74] Robert M. Wilson, "A Note on the Gospel of Truth," New Testament Studies, Vol. 9, No. 3, April 1963, pp. 295-298.

[75] Grobel, TGT, p. 141.

[76] Robert M. Wilson, NTS, April 1963, p. 297.

[77] Ibid., p. 297.

[78] Grobel, TGT, p. 141.

Irenaeus clearly regarded the Valentinians as antinomian. On the other hand, if The Gospel of Truth is from the pen of Valentinus himself at an earlier part of his career, his association with the Church, which was being troubled by those of an antinomian position (I John; Rev. 2:6, 14-15, 20), may have caused him to urge an ethical conduct as that which was called for.

f. Regarding Eschatology

It is likewise difficult to become dogmatic about the eschatology of The Gospel of Truth. That which seems to be an eschatological reference, begins in 24:33:

> Just so in the case of the lack: it is want to melt away in the completion. Hence the Schema is not apparent from that moment, but will melt away in the harmony of the Reunion, for now their works lie mutually equal at the moment when the Reunion shall complete the maeit (possibly here the spaces). In the Reunion each one shall receive himself (again). In a gnosis he will purify himself in many ways in a Reunion, as it eats up the matter within him like a flame and the darkness with a light, the death with a life (24:33-25:18).

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[79] Wilson, NTS, April 1963, p. 297.

To this point the language seems to speak of a consummation understood as the completion and reunion in which the lack is completely eliminated; matter and death, so prominent in the success of Lack, meet the same end. It is precisely here, however, that the language takes a severe turn, and one reads, "If then, these things have happened to each one of us, there is therefore that which beseems us." The tense used here (perfect I) is completely unexpected after the futures of 25:10-18, and may very well mean that the preceeding portions were meant to be understood logically rather than temporally. In such case, the eschatology would not really be futuristic, but conditionally present.

There are in The Gospel of Truth some decided contrasts with previously discussed materials. The cosmogony possesses a far less imaginative mythology. The theology is of a Biblical orientation, as is much of the anthropology. The areas of morality and eschatology, however, confront us with material that render decisiveness quite difficult in the characterization of The Gospel of Truth.

2. The Gospel According to Thomas

Another of the significant gnostic gospels that comes under the classification of Christianized Gnosticism is The Gospel According to Thomas. This work in the estimation of scholars is also a work of the first half of the second century. The actual codex found at Shenoboskion is in the opinion of scholars probably a fourth or early fifth century work. The original work dates back much earlier. "We are dealing here with a translation of an adaptation in Sahidic Coptic or a work the primitive text of which must have been produced in Greek about 140 A.D., and which was based on even more ancient sources."[80] This then continues our retrogression from the second century toward the first century of gnostic writings.

The Gospel According to Thomas is far different from the Gospels of the New Testament. Its character is that of a collection of sayings and parables. There is relatively little narrative; there are no miracles, and there is no account of the life and ministry of Jesus. Many of the sayings have parallels in the canonical Gospels, yet in Thomas they appear in different order, and, with but few exceptions, the wording of the canonical Gospels is not reproduced exactly. They are expanded, compressed, modified and adapted, and sometimes those from several different contexts are joined to make an entirely new saying.[81] The very character of the book makes it valuable for the study of Gnosticism. In Robert Grant's opinion, it is "the most important document discovered at Nag Hammadi."[82] Compared with it the other books (except perhaps for The Gospel of Truth) shed little direct light on early Christianity, though they illuminate the gnostic religion. The Gospel According to Thomas shows how gnostics understood Jesus and His Gospel; how they constructed a bridge between their own faith and that of the Christian Church. It is probably the most significant witness to the early perversion of Christianity by those who wanted to create Jesus in their own image. Ultimately, it testifies not to what Jesus said, but to what men wished he had said.[83]

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[80] A. Guillaumont, et. al., The Gospel According to Thomas. (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1959), p. vi.

[81] R. M. Wilson, Studies in the Gospel of Thomas (London: A. R. Mowbray & Co., Limited, 1960), pp. 4-5.

[82] Robert M. Grant, The Secret Sayings of Jesus (Garden City: Dolphin Books, Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1960), p. 18.

Let us then turn to the book, once again applying the selected categories and, although because of the nature of the book they will be somewhat limited, learn what we can about its content.

a. Regarding Cosmogony

One of the early references to the creation of heaven and earth is found in Saying 12, "You will go to James the righteous for whose sake heaven and earth came into being." It is quite difficult to comprehend exactly what is meant by this statement. Grant reminds us that the exaltation of James is characteristic of the Jewish-Christian and Naasene tradition.[84] Doresse allows the possibility that James here may be regarded as a supernatural power.[85] We can observe that it does posit a beginning of the heavens and earth, and though it does not attribute that to any one, it is for the benefit of James. The passage does not contribute greatly to our understanding of the cosmogony of The Gospel According to Thomas.

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[83] Ibid., p. 18.

[84] Ibid., p. 128.

[85] Jean Doresse, The Secret Books of the Egyptian Gnostics (New York: The Viking Press, 1960), p. 140.

Saying 21 is more helpful. There, the disciples of Jesus are likened to little children who have installed themselves in a field which is not theirs. When the owner came and demanded the release of the field, it was necessary for them to take off their clothes before him. This probably rests on an allusion to Matthew 13 where the field is likened to the world. If the reference to disrobing is understood as an allusion to the body which the true gnostic wants to strip off, then we can recognize some of the implications this account holds toward the world order. Grant and Freedman would understand this as a legitimate interpretation of the passage,[86] and Wilson refers us to the widespread theory in Philo that teaches that the body is the garment of the soul, if not its tomb.[87] Thomas then seems to posit the world as alien to the gnostic, and the body as that material aspect of man which is undesirable.

Sayings 50 and 77 both speak about the origin of the world order. "We have come from the light, where the light has originated through itself." Like the previous materials we have surveyed, it posits a self-existent One from whom all things have come. Saying 77 adds to this, "Jesus said: I am the Light that is above them all. I am the All, the All came forth from Me and the All attained to Me."

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[86] Robert Grant, TSSJ, p. 138.

[87] Robert Wilson, TGT, pp. 36-37.

The only other allusion of this category which impressed itself on my mind was that in Saying 85: "Jesus said: Adam came into existence from a great power and a great wealth, (yet) he did not become worthy of you. For if he had been worthy, he would not have tasted death." Does this all suggest once again the possibility of a faltering Demiurge? Adam's existence is from a great power, yet he falls short of those who are light as is manifest through his mortality.

Material for establishing the cosmogony of Thomas is quite sparse, then, but from what we have presented here, it is possible through implication to recognize gnostic facets.

b. Regarding Theology

Much of the material considered could also be classified in the theology category, however, in turning to this category there are many more references, and less difficulty in reaching conclusions regarding the teaching of Thomas on this subject.

The Gospel According to Thomas speaks of all the members of the Christian trinity, and in much the same vein as the New Testament Gospels. There are references to the

Kingdom of the Father (Sayings 57, 97, 98 and 114). He is spoken of as the living Father also (Saying 50). There is little made of the Holy Spirit in Thomas; however, in Saying 44, somewhat parallel to Matthew 12:31-32, and Luke 12:10, we read, "Whoever blasphemes against the Father, it shall be forgiven him, and whoever blasphemes against the Son it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever blasphemes against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him either on earth or in heaven." Aside from this reference, the only other place in Thomas referring to the Holy Spirit is Saying 53. Here Jesus, in speaking about the profit of circumcision, says "the true circumcision in Spirit has become profitable in every way." In each case, the translators have capitalized the word "spirit," indicating their choice of this as a reference to deity.

Thus far in Thomas the character of theology seems to be moving in the direction of the New Testament. Saying 100, however, gives occasion for pause: "Give the things of Caesar to Caesar, give the things of God to God and give to Me what is Mine." The inference is, of course, that Jesus recognized a difference between Himself and God. Grant and Freedman are inclined to that conclusion,[88] as is also Robert Wilson.[89] There are other passages which seem to support the superiority of Jesus and argue against the trinity, e.g., Saying 30, "Jesus said: where there are three gods, they are gods; where there are two or one, I am with him." The latter half of this saying is probably parallel to the idea expressed in Matthew 18:20, "Where there are two or three gathered in My name, there am I in the midst of them." According to Robert Grant, the first part of the saying is found in different revisions, Greek and Coptic.[90] The Greek speaks of some number of persons, more than one, who are without God and if the fragmentary text has been correctly restored, may read: "Wherever there are two, they are without God, and where there is one alone, I say, I am with him." Professor Grant believes that, "The remark about the gods may possibly involve a criticism of the doctrine as tritheism; according to the Coptic text, Christians may be worshipping three (mere) gods.[91] This would fit into the gnostic patterns we have seen in many of the positions thus far.

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[88] Robert Grant, TSSJ, p. 183.

[89] Robert Wilson, TGT, pp. 27, 59.

Saying 15 also presents another interesting observation regarding Jesus, however. "Jesus said: When you see Him who was not born of woman, prostrate yourself upon your face and adore Him: He is your Father." For the gnostic, Jesus cannot have been born of a woman. The similarity of this to John 14:9, "He who has seen Me has seen the Father"; and John 10:30, "I and the Father are one," is easily recognized. There is, on the other hand, in

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[90] Robert Grant, TSSJ, p. 145. [91] Ibid., p. 146.

Saying 28 a statement which presents a problem. There it states, "Jesus said: I took My stand in the midst of the world and in flesh I appeared to them." This, of course, has some significant parallels in the New Testament: John 1:14, ho logos sarx egeneto; I Timothy 3:16, hos ephanerothe en sarki; I John 4:2, en sarki eleluthota; and finally II John 7 speaks of men who will not regard the erxomenon en sarki. As Doresse points out, the Coptic version elsewhere absolutely rejects the flesh.[92] Wilson is inclined to accept Peuch's theory that this presents evidence to support the fact that this document was not originally gnostic, though there is the possibility of its being an orthodox revision of an originally gnostic work.[93] Another solution may well be the understanding of the verb translated "appeared" in a Docetic sense. With the emphasis throughout Thomas against "flesh" and the rather thorough agreement among scholars that this is a gnostic document, this could be the better way of understanding the saying. If this is true, then, the teaching regarding Jesus here may be that of His superiority to a god of this world, and His "appearance" was to reveal to men the secret of escape from this world. This interpretation would call for a distinction between the Father and the god of this world.

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[92] Jean Doresse, TSBEG, 164.

[93] Robert Wilson, TGT, p. 42.

Saying 61 would seem to confirm that interpretation. Here, in answer to a query as to His identity, Jesus replies, "I am He who is from the Same." Grant and Freedman translate this, "I am He who came into existence from that which is equal;[94] and believe that there may be in the saying a reference to John 5:18, "He called God His own Father, making Himself equal to God." Saying 77 also blends into this interpretation. Here Christ says, "I am the light that is above them all. I am the All. The All came forth from Me and the All attained to Me. Cleave a piece of wood, I am there; lift up a stone and you will find me there." Finally, an observation in Saying 79 and its parallel in Luke 11:27-28 adds to the argument for this interpretation. In Luke, Jesus says, "Blessed are those who hear the Word of God and keep it." Saying 79 changes this to, "Blessed are those who hear the Word of the Father and have kept it in truth." The distinction between the words God and Father is preserved in gnostic fashion as we have previously observed.

To summarize the theological category, we note a distinction between god, i.e. the god of this world, and the Father. Though there are few references to the Holy Spirit, He is given a very high place. Jesus is identified with the Father and His appearance on earth seems to be understood in a Docetic manner.

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[94] Robert Grant, TSSJ, p. 163.

c. Regarding Anthropology

Turning to the category of anthropology, one again finds many references from which to draw conclusions. Saying 28, for example, shows the natural limitations and insensibility of man to God and true values, as it says that men "are blind in their heart and do not see, that empty they have come into the world and that empty they seek to go out of the world again. But now they are drunk. When they have shaken off their wine, they will repent."

Saying 21 which we considered under cosmogony suggested the view of the body taught in Thomas. It is further developed in Saying 29. "Jesus said: If the flesh has come into existence because of the spirit, it is a marvel of marvels. But I marvel at how this great wealth has made its home in this poverty." Saying 112 is much the same when it says, "Jesus said: Woe to the flesh which depends upon the soul; woe to the soul which depends upon the flesh."

In Saying 11, the spiritual aspect of the gnostic is seen.

> The dead are not alive and the living shall not die. In the days when you devoured the dead, you made it alive; when you come into light what will you do? On the day when you were one, you became two. But when you have become two what will you do?

The first part of the passage is an allusion to the dead world of matter, probably referring to those who are incapable of knowing the truth. The living which will not die is, on the other hand, a reference to the gnostic.

Dead matter was made living when it was consumed by a gnostic whose true existence was spiritual, no matter how it appeared to others. "Coming into the light," is a reference to the eating of living things, or spiritual things.[95] Still another facet is presented in the latter part of the saying. "On the day when you were one, you became two," may well refer to the view among gnostics that man originally was androgynous. Having lost this in the "fall," the attaining of the Kingdom now necessitates the obliteration of differences, especially sex. Saying 22 confirms this:

> When you make the two one, and when you make the inner as the outer and the outer as the inner and the above as the below, and when you make the male and the female into a single one, so that the male will not be male and the female not be female, when you make eyes in the place of a hand, and a foot in the place of a foot, and an image in the place of an image, then shall you enter the Kingdom.

The allusions here to the unity in the Pauline concept of the Body of Christ (I Corinthians 12; Galatians 3:28) are easily seen: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus." However, beyond this is a view of man which attributes an extremely low view to sex, and an inferior position to women. In fact, Saying 114 states,

> Let Mary go out from among us, because women are not worthy of life. Jesus said: See, I shall lead her, so that I will make her male, that she too may become a living spirit, resembling you males. For every woman who makes herself male will enter the kingdom of Heaven.

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[95] Ibid., p. 127.

In summary, the anthropology of Thomas clearly shows the typical aversion of Gnosticism to the body. There is a rejection of sex and low view of woman. Man's natural state is one of blindness and insensitivity to God, a view, which is much like The Gospel of Truth.

d. Regarding Soteriology

There are probably more references to soteriology in Thomas than any other category. One is immediately confronted with the subject in Saying one: "Whoever finds the explanation of these words will not taste death. Jesus said: Let him who seeks, not cease seeking until he finds, and when he finds, he will be troubled, and when he has been troubled, he will marvel and he will reign over the All." One sees Matthew 7:7-8 shining clearly through this saying. In the third Saying the same concept is encountered, "If you will know yourselves, then you will be known and you will know that you are the sons of the living Father. But, if you do not know yourselves then you are in poverty and you are poverty." Still further in Saying 67 one finds the same idea. "Jesus said: Whoever knows the All but fails to know himself lacks everything." The latter part of the saying especially correlates with the idea of Saying three. Grant believes that the first of the verse must have been garbled in transmission because "All" must surely be a reference to Jesus as Saying 77 would indicate.[96]

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[96] Ibid., p. 168.

Similarly, in Saying 69, "Jesus said: Blessed are those who have known the Father in truth." The persecuted and troubled are without doubt those who were led to self-knowledge as a consequence of the seeking. Again, Saying 70 follows the same train of thought, "Jesus said: If you bring forth that within yourselves, that which you have will save you. If you do not have that within yourselves, that which you do not have within you will kill you."

Sayings four and five confront us with a different facet of gaining this knowledge:

> Jesus said: The old man in days will not hesitate to ask a child of seven days about the place of Life, and he will live. For many who are first shall become last and they shall become a single one. Jesus said: Know what is in thy sight, and what is hidden from thee will be revealed to thee.

Knowledge is available which will, when known, lead to further knowledge and this is apparently associated with the seeking and finding of the previous references. That it can be gained by an old man asking a seven day old child, however, would seem to point to its discovery as other than through normal channels, and is probably an indication of revelation.[97] Its resulting in the seeker becoming "a single one" is an aspect seen frequently in the soteriology of Thomas. "Jesus said: Many are standing at the door, but the solitary are the ones who will enter the bridal chamber" (Saying 75).

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[97] Ibid., p. 120.

There is also a certain human expectation and response emphasized in many of the sayings:

> Come to Me, for easy is My yoke and My lordship is gentle, and you shall find repose for yourselves (90); Jesus said: Whoever drinks from My mouth shall become as I am and I myself will become he, and the hidden things shall be revealed to him (108); Those here who do the will of My Father, they are My brethren and My mother; these are they who shall enter the Kingdom of My Father (99); When they have shaken off their wine, then they will repent (28); [and finally], When you take your clothes and put them under your feet as the little children and tred on them, then shall you behold the Son of the Living One (37 and 46).

In contrast to this emphasis on man's responsibility and activity, there is an emphasis on election. From Saying 23, "I will choose you, one out of a thousand, and two out of ten thousand," it would seem the elect are a smaller number than the non-elect, reflecting somewhat the straight gate and narrow way of Matthew 7:13 ff. Another reflection of Matthew regarding election is seen in Saying 40. "Jesus said: a vine has been planted without the Father and, it is not established, it will be pulled up by its roots and be destroyed." A still clearer statement of election is in Saying 49:

> Jesus said: Blessed are the solitary and elect, for you shall find the Kingdom; because you come from it, and you shall go there again. . . . If they say to you: "Who are you?," say: "We are His sons and we are the elect of the Living Father."

Much of the soteriology in Thomas reflects concepts which are New Testament, and yet it is precisely its lack of identity with the New Testament concepts as a whole that creates a marked contrast between the two. Salvation in Thomas is the realization of self-knowledge. Although the gnostic is directed to Jesus, there is a complete absence of any reference to His death and resurrection in connection with salvation.

e. Regarding Morality

The category of morality presents an interesting study, and even more so when a contrast of Thomas with certain elements of Judaism is introduced.

Very early in the Gospel one encounters an attitude which rejects the ascetic and ritualistic elements of Judaism. In Saying six, Jesus' disciples ask, "Would'st thou that we fast, and how should we pray and should we give alms, and what diet should we observe? Jesus said: Do not lie; and do not do what you hate, for all things are manifest before Heaven." It is interesting to see what appears to be an emphasis for the observance of moral standards. Saying 14 goes on in the same vein,

> If you fast, you will beget sin for yourselves, and if you pray, you will be condemned, and if you give alms, you will do evil to your spirits. And if you go into any land and wander in the regions, if they receive you, eat what they set before you, heal the sick among them. For what goes into your mouth will not defile you, but what comes out of your mouth, that is what will defile you.

Saying 53 treats circumcision in much the same manner. "His disciples said to Him: Is circumcision profitable or not? He said to them: If it were profitable, their father would beget them circumcised from their mother. But true circumcision in Spirit has become profitable in every way." The parallel to Paul in Romans 2:25-29, and Colossians 2:11 is obvious.

In a frame of reference more properly dealing with morality, however, we turn to Saying 25. "Love thy brother as thy soul, guard him as the apple of thine eyes." Saying 26 adds, "Jesus said: The mote that is in thy brother's eye thou seest, but the beam that is in thine eye, thou seest not. When thou castest the beam out of thine eye, then thou wilt see clearly to cast the mote out of thy brother's eye."

Saying seven also calls for a moral-ethical conduct of high level, though in a much more mystical manner. "Jesus said: Blessed is the lion which the man eats and the lion will become man; and cursed is the man who the lion eats and the lion will become man." Grant points out that on the basis of other sayings in Thomas the inference can be drawn that the lion must first be killed and become a corpse in order to be eaten; knowing the world is equivalent to finding a corpse; the gnostic who has eaten what is dead has made it living; therefore, by eating the dead lion, which may be the hostile world (I Peter 5:8), you can overcome the world by assimilating it to yourself. If the true inner man is consumed by the lion and the lion becomes the man, the world has overcome the gnostic. In the Naasene system, the lion is a symbol of sexual desire. Saying 45 adds the thought,

> They do not harvest grapes from thorns, nor do they gather figs from thistles; they give no fruit - A good man brings forth good out of his treasure which is in his heart, and speaks evil things. For out of the abundance of the heart he brings forth evil things.

The moral and ethical sphere one encounters then in Thomas appears to call for quite a high standard, a standard which scorns the outward show of religion, and calls for an inward quality of spirituality which is evident in everyday activity.

f. Eschatology

The Gospel According to Thomas speaks a great deal about the Kingdom. It is always the Kingdom of Heaven, or the Kingdom of the Father, and never the Kingdom of God. There seems to be a sense in which it is understood as existing in a present aspect.

> Jesus said: If those who lead you say to you: See the Kingdom is in heaven, then, the birds of heaven will precede you. If they say to you: It is in the sea, then the fish will precede you. But the Kingdom is within you and without you. If you know yourselves, then you will be known and you will know that you are the sons of the Living Father (Saying three).

Again, a similar meaning comes from Saying 18,

> The disciples said to Jesus: Have you then discovered the beginning so that you inquire about the end? For where the beginning is, there shall be the end. Blessed is he who shall stand at the beginning, and he shall know the end and he shall not taste death.

Saying 51 and Saying 82 add to this picture,

> When will the repose of the dead come about and when will the new world come? He said to them: What you expect has come, but you know it not. . . . whatever is near to Me is near to the fire, and whoever is far from Me is far from the Kingdom.

Having looked at all of these, there are, nevertheless, several sayings which sound as though there may be some culmination of history in a cataclysmic event similar to that we have noted in previous positions. Saying 11, for example, states, "Jesus said: This heaven shall pass away and the one above it shall pass away and the dead are not alive and the living shall not die." Saying 57 goes on to say, "On the day of harvest the weeds will appear, they will pull them and burn them." Finally, in Saying 111 Jesus says, "The heavens will be rolled up and the earth in your presence, and he who lives in the Living One shall neither death nor fear."

The eschatology of Thomas seems to be less extensive in detail compared to some of the positions of other groups we have surveyed, but appears to consist of two aspects of the Kingdom, one present, and possibly one future, possessing some cataclysmic culmination to history.

C. From New Testament Documents

In turning to the New Testament documents, the retrogression is again from the second century to the first toward Pauline writings. Conclusions will be based on selected documents which are representative of the gnostic pattern of thought.

1. The Epistle of First John

In the mind of most scholars, this epistle was written somewhere between the late first century and the early second century. Details concerning the debate of the authorship of this epistle are of no real import for the purposes of this paper. More important is the question of dating. However, the relatively few years difference in the minds of scholars does not merit the investment of time and space that an adequate discussion of the question would take. Whether one would date the epistle with Enslin at the "first quarter of the second century,"[98] or C. H. Dodd, somewhere between A.D. 96-110,[99] or that of Metzger, who simply states, "The date of the composition of the three letters of John is thought to be about the end of the first Christian century,"[100] is relatively unimportant for the purpose of this paper. These dates would encompass the opinion of most scholarship, and either extremity held would still result in our moving from the middle of the second century toward the early second or late first century. As such they would furnish us with a document closer to the Pauline period, containing materials which in the consensus of scholars treats at least an incipient Gnosticism. Guthrie remarks regarding the heretics the epistle was written to combat as follows:

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[98] M. S. Enslin, The Literature of the Christian Movement, Harper Torchbooks (New York: Harper & Bro., 1956), pp. 345-356.

[99] C. H. Dodd, The Johannine Epistles, Moffatt's NEW Testament Commentary (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1946), pp. lxvi. [Hereafter referred to as MNTC].

[100] B. M. Metzger, The New Testament: Its Background, Growth and Content (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1965), p. 261.

> It is at least certain that these false teachers came within the general category of Gnosticism, although that term needs further definition in view of the wider understanding of it obtained from the recent discovery of the Nag Hammadi library. If we restrict the term Gnosticism to those developed second century systems of thought which absorbed within their pagan background certain Christian ideas, and by this means threatened the orthodox Church, our epistle would seem to belong to a stage somewhat before these developed Christian Gnostic systems.[101]

This small document of five chapters which seems to possess "lack of arrangement and plan,"[102] appears to be directed at two basic errors: The author appears to write against those who deny the truth of the incarnation, and those who also seem to allow for an antinomianism. To propound such teaching and yet claim to be in fellowship with God was in the mind of the writer nothing less than lying (I John 1:5-6).

The selected categories which can be applied to this epistle then are two: theology and morality.

The theology of those against whom this epistle was addressed is inferred. The emphasis of the epistle plus several direct statements imply a polemic against some who denied the incarnation, a cardinal doctrine to the writer. In fact, the introduction of the epistle immediately dwells upon the reality of the body or the humanity of Jesus as well as His pre-incarnate state of deity (1:1-3). Regarding His deity the author states, as he speaks of Jesus Christ as the

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[101] Donald Guthrie, New Testament Introduction (London: The Tyndale Press, 1962), III:192-193. [Hereafter referred to as NTI].

[102] M. S. Enslin, The Literature of the Christian of the Christian Movement, p. 343.

Life, that "life, the eternal (life) which was with the Father," has been manifest (1:2). Regarding the reality of His incarnation as opposed, apparently, to a Doceticism, he writes, "we heard, we have seen with our eyes, we have beheld or contemplated (etheasametha) and our hands have handled (epselaphesan).[103]

It is interesting to observe that he offers the evidence of three of the five senses, and not simply of his own experience, but apparently the experience of a company - "what he and his fellows have seen and heard."[104]

Three other references in the epistle may very well explain the reason for the author's labored introduction. In 2:22 it states, "Who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, he who denies the Father and the Son." If there is any question as to precisely what the author has in mind by that statement, it would seem to disappear when in 4:1-3 he states:

> Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are of God; for many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit which confesseth that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh (Iesou Christou en sarki eleluthota) is of God, and

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[103] Etheasametha - behold intelligently so as to grasp the meaning and significance of that which comes within our vision. The word nearly always suggests careful and deliberate vision which interprets rightly or wrongly, its object. A. E. Brooke, The Johannine Epistles, The International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1912), p. 4.

[104] Brooke, ICC (One should also note that John changes from the plural to the singular later: 2:1, 7, 12; 5:13, etc.)

> every spirit which does not confess Jesus is not of God. This is the spirit of antichrist, of which you heard that it was coming, and now it is in the world already."

As Brooke comments, "Only the spirits which inspire men to make such a confession are of God."[105]

The third reference which amplifies the emphasis upon the reality of the incarnation:

> Who is it that overcomes the world but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God? This is He who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ, not with the water only, but with the water and the blood. And the Spirit is the witness, because the Spirit is the truth. There are three witnesses, the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three agree. If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater; for this is the testimony of God that He has borne witness to His Son (5:5-9 RSV).

This rather complex passage is believed to be aimed at the same heresy which denied the reality of the incarnation. It is nearly unanimously agreed by commentators that water and blood in this passage refer to the baptism and the cross of Christ, that is, as Barclay puts it, "John is saying that both the baptism and the cross of Jesus are essential parts of His Messiahship."[106] It would appear that there were some who were saying that although He came by water, He did not come by blood (ouk en to hudati monon all en to hudati kai en to haimati), that is, that His cross was not an essential part of His Messiahship. The author is maintaining that the baptism by which

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[105] Ibid., p. 110.

[106] William Barclay, The Letters of John and Jude (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1958), p. 127.

He was consecrated to His Messianic work, and the Passion by which He completed His work of atonement are both essential and bear witness along with the Spirit that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. As Brooke states it:

> the water of John's baptism, after which He was declared to be the Son of God, and the blood shed upon the cross, where testimony was given to the fact that He is the Son of God, for His death was not like that of other men. Thus the three witnesses all tend to the same point.[107]

Or again as Dodds puts it:

> The Spirit is, as we have seen, both a factor in the historical life of Jesus and a continuing factor in the experience of the Church. Similarly, the baptism and the crucifixion are authenticated facts in history, and as such bear witness to the reality of the incarnate life of the Son of God.[108]

The passages, then, correlate to indicate there were those who denied the reality of the incarnation as the Church taught it. There is in 1:1-4; 2:22 and 4:1-3 what would seem to be a polemic against a Doceticism which taught that Jesus only appeared to be a man, and that the death of Christ bore no significance. Irenaeus, of course, attributes something of these very heresies to Cerinthus who taught that Jesus was the son of Joseph and Mary. According to his view, after His baptism, Christ ascended on Jesus explaining His miraculous ministry. However, Christ departed from Jesus and it was Jesus only who suffered and rose again while Christ "remained, impassible, inasmuch as He was a spiritual being."[109]

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[107] Brooke, ICC, p. 132; cf. also G. A. Butterfield, The Interpretor's Bible (New York: Abingdon Press, 1957), XII:292-295.

[108] MNTC, p. 130.

It is also Irenaeus in his relating of the incident of John's encounter with Cerinthus at the bath in Ephesus who dates this heretic in the proximity of the time of the First Epistle of John.[110] Although there is the rejection of the story by some scholars, Peake, on the other hand, is strongly inclined to accept its authenticity.[111] Whether this is precisely the heretic in the writer's sight or not, it puts him in the realm of possibility.

That those holding these views were not Jews, would seem to be indicated through the author's statement in 2:19, "they went out from us (*ex hemon ex elthon*), but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us: but they went out, that it might be plain that they all are not of us." The phrase *from us* is very emphatic through its being placed first in the sentence in the Greek text, and certainly portrays a distinct secession from the Church. "It is incredible that the words can mean 'they proceeded from us *Jews*!' What point would there be in that? Moreover, Saint John never writes as a Jew but always as a Christian to Christians. 'Us' includes all true Christians."[112]

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[109] Iren. AH, I, 26.

[110] Ibid., III, 3.

[111] Arthur S. Peake, "Cerinthus, Cerinthians" *Enncyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, ed., James Hastings (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1924), III, 318.

A second sphere which possibly represents the presence of a gnostic element in the Church in this period is that which alludes to an antinomianism.

In the first chapter of this epistle there is a significant passage which indicates the possibility of an antinomian element posing a threat to members of the churches to whom this epistle was written. Having posited the moral perfection of God by the statement, "God is light and in Him is no darkness at all," (1:5) the author then proposes a test of orthodoxy based upon one's character of life. "If we say we have fellowship with Him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not live according to the truth." It seems evident that the writer, laying down the premise of God's morality is saying that one cannot maintain that he experiences fellowship, whatever form it may take, with One whose character is of moral perfection and yet maintain a way of life which is characterized as contrary to moral perfectness. He does not imply by this statement moral imperfectness, but moral degeneracy. This seems quite clear from the way the author expresses himself in verse 6,[113] where one might read very literally:

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[112] A. Plummer, The Epistles of Saint John, Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges (Cambridge at the University Press, 1911), p. 108.

[113] ean eipomen hoti koininian exomen met autou kai en to skotei peripatomen.

> If the claim we make is that we continually have fellowship with God, i.e. this is our state or character of life, and in reality the character of the life of the one making that claim is one marked continually by violations of the commandment of God, the person is simply a liar and does not really live according to the truth.

That, on the other hand, he is not insisting on moral perfectness by this statement is readily ascertained from 1:8-2:2:

> If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar and his word is not in us. My little children, I am writing this to you so that you may not sin; but if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

The thrust of his remarks apparently is directed toward some who claim knowledge of God and yet live in a manner contradictory to the expressed commandments of God. (3:24; 5:13)

Dodd comments on this passage:

> It was necessary to lay stress upon this point. The age was a religious age, and many religious and philosophical systems offered communion with the divine. But religious fervor did not always go with moral seriousness. According to our authorities for the next period, there were heretical forms of Christianity which fell far below the best kind of paganism in their moral standards. Our author sees that danger in the kind of teaching which is making propaganda in the church specious propaganda, since it uses the language of an elevated mysticism. He insists on the ethical criterion.[114]

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[114] MNTC, pp. 19-20.

The reason for such a contradiction as this evidently came from a misunderstanding of the belief that Christians had been given a new, superior nature. Consequently, some understood this as implying that Christians were already sinless, at least those attaining to superior enlightenment were. There was no further need for striving, for even though they did things which other men would count sinful, they really were not sinners. Their mystical communion with God removed them from that category.[115]

This small epistle, then, at the close of the first century, bears witness to the presence of those whose views fall into the classification by most scholars as gnostic. The Person of Jesus was accounted for through a Docetic theory. The death of Jesus, so central in the early church's message, was denied any real significance. Knowing God was associated apparently and solely with a metaphysical activity and bore no relation to the ethical and moral activity of man.

2. The Epistle to the Colossians

The epistle to the Colossians also seems to be written with a heresy in mind that threatens doctrines of the Person of Jesus Christ and His work as they were understood by the early Church.

There is by no means unanimous agreement as to the identity of those who are the cause of Paul's polemic in this epistle. Some things about which Paul writes here appear to be founded on a need to speak to a Jewish reaction to the Church, while other facets of his letter hardly seem to correlate with a Judaistic doctrine by any stretch of the imagination. Van Unnik, for example, believes it is still an open question whether the doctrines attacked by Paul here were types of gnostic utterances. They may well be simply syncretistic teachings of a more general sense.[116] Grant states:

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[115] Ibid., pp. 21-22.

> All we can say about the Colossian situation is that there is nothing which seems to be specifically related to any form of Gnosticism which we know. Some of the terminology was employed by later gnostics, but this fact proves nothing.[117]

The question is not easily dismissed, however. The language of 1:15-19 certainly shows the presence of a false teaching which was in some manner detracting from the Person of Christ.[118] Paul emphasizes that Jesus is the image of the invisible God (*eikon tou theou tou aoratou*); that in Him all things were created (*en auto ektisthe ta panta*) in the spheres of heaven and earth, visible or invisible, whether thrones, dominions or principalities or authorities - all things were created through Him (*di' autou*) and for him (*eis auton*). Further, Paul would certainly seem to remove the possibility of understanding Jesus to be conceived in any sense as a deity once removed from the Father of All, a doctrine which we have previously seen taught by some. Verse 19 states, "For in Him all the fulness of God (Greek: only "pan to pleroma") was pleased to dwell," and this is further amplified by 2:9, "For in Him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily" (pan to pleroma tes theotetos somatikos). These references could very well reflect a refutation of a concept of Christ as being part of a spiritual hierarchy similar to those preveiously surveyed.

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[116] Van Unnik, NDGW, p. 39.

[117] Robert F. Grant, *An Historical Introduction to the New Testament* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1963), p. 206.

[118] Guthrie, NTI, pp. 162-167.

The tendency to easily attribute this to a polemic against Judaism is thwarted by other considerations. Although the particular period of time and the geographic setting of Asia Minor held its difficulties for Paul with representatives of Judaism, and although references in 2:11-17 to "circumcision," "questions of food and drink," to "festivals or a new moon or a sabbath" which are "only a shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ," and such phrases quickly remind one of the Jewish legal debate in the early church, 2:18-23 confronts one with that which can hardly represent a facet of Judaism. "The worship of angels" mentioned there would be strongly resisted by the orthodox Jews who opposed Paul. Angels were given a place of mediatorial function in relation to the law, but there is no evidence of any tendency to worship them at this stage.[119]

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[119] Ibid., p. 164.

Another expression in chapter two would seem to strengthen the argument that Paul is not writing only against Jewish opponents. Verse 2:20 states, "If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the universe, why do you live as if you still belonged to the world?"

The word, "elements" (stoixeia) suggests to many a doctrine of planetary spirits,[120] a reference to the powerful spirit-world which was at that time widely believed to control the affairs of the natural world. Burton maintains that although the word eventually came to mean "angel, spirit, or God," it is not at all certain that this usage belongs to the first century.[121] Nevertheless, Paul's use of it in this context of Colossians would seem to bear some weight, and he may very well have reference to a gnostic-like doctrine. This would appear to correlate with his emphasis in 1:15-20 of Christ's preeminence over all things on earth or heaven, visible or invisible.

Also the presence of certain other terms, all of which were used in the fully developed second century Gnosticism, cannot singly be dismissed. In 1:19 and 2:9 the term "pleroma" (fullness) is found. The term "gnosis"

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[120] R. M. Grant, Gnosticism and Early Christianity (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959), p. 156. [Hereafter referred to as GEC].

[121] E. D. Burton, Galatians, The International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1921), p. 513.

(knowledge) is found in 2:3. "*Apheidia somatos*" (neglecting the body) is in 2:23. Such considerations, plus the warning in 2:8 against "philosophy and vain deceit" suggests something more than Judaism.

Colossians 2:20-23 also seems to describe an asceticism which would well be other than Judaism:

> Why do you submit to regulations, "Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch" (referring to things which all perish as they are used), according to human precepts and doctrines? These have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting rigor of devotion and self abasement and severity to the body, but they are of no value in checking the indulgence of the flesh.

Cullman suggests that the Jewish character behind the teaching of the Colossian heresy infers the possibility of a pre-Christian Jewish Gnosticism. Possibly the Hellenists of Acts, though not necessarily former Essenes, represent a kind of Judaism close to this group, and were a group which broke away from the early church.[122]

Others see the possibility of a similar answer. Robert Wilson states in his book, *The Gnostic Problem*:

> Dupont . . . quotes Julicher . . . as saying that the false teachers of Colosse become intelligible only if we take them as Judaisers on the one hand, and gnosticisers on the other. . . . A gnosticising Judaism of this sort they have imported with them from without; that is to say, Gnosticism already existed in the apostolic age, and *it was introduced* into the Christian Church by Jews. . . . Goppelt thinks these teachers came not from Palestine but from the strongly syncretistic diaspora of Phrygia. As Goppelt notes . . . the

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[122] Oscar Cullman, "The Significance of the Qumran Texts for Research Into the Beginnings of Christianity"[122] *The Journal of Biblical Literature*, Vol. 4, 1955, pp. 213-216.

distinction between the "Judaism" of Galatia and the Colossian heresy is particularly clear.[123]

It may be well to conclude with Guthrie that, "At most the connections with Gnosticism are the vaguest kind and point to an incipient Gnosticism which had not as yet been formulated into a fixed system, and which may have been propagated by a Jewish sect."[124]

3. Summary Regarding the New Testament Materials

This representative survey of the New Testament materials is sufficient to demonstrate that the writers of the period of the last half of the first century A.D. encountered those who taught to some degree concepts akin to those we have surveyed in the sources of the heresilogists, and the Nag Hammadi texts. We have noted in John's first epistle a Doceticism which rejected the incarnation. Other parts of the epistle indicate the practice of an antinomianism on the part of those against whom the epistle was directed. Together, these facts seem to spell out the attributing of evil to matter. Along with this, there is the use of a terminology which betrays a relationship to the core of concepts we have been reviewing: fellowship with God, knowing God, light and darkness.

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[123] Robert M. Wilson, The Gnostic Problem (London: A. R. Mowbray & Co., Limited, 1958), p. 93.

[124] NTI, p. 166.

Then, the soteriological orientation of the Colossian epistle seems to present a spiritual hierarchy and an asceticism as a means whereby man is delivered from his dilemma.

Though neither of these epistles deals with these subjects in depth, the implications of the presuppositions of the heresies against which they are contending, lend themselves to the general scheme of the cosmogonies we have surveyed in the other literature. That is, the writers are concerned to demonstrate both the humanity and deity of Jesus. He was not simply a man, and He was not simply a member of a hierarchy of created spiritual beings. Also, the fact that God became flesh, and that self-abasement and submitting ones self to regulations were not essential for Christians showed they did not regard matter as evil.

D. From the Dead Sea Scrolls

The retrogressive survey to this point has led from the writings of the second-century fathers through some of the Nag Hammadi texts to the New Testament itself. Materials from the New Testament presented a polemic against concepts which seem to share a common denominator with the preceding materials.

The Dead Sea Scrolls also represent an area which many feel should be included in this survey. Robert Grant, for example, says:

> There is no need to go into the . . . history of the Dead Sea Community at Qumran. All we need say is that according to our theory nearly all the ingredients later found in Gnosticism were already present in the life and the literature of these Essenes or near-Essenes.[125]

Their inclusion is essential for several reasons. The community was certainly within the sphere of New Testament times as regards location and date. The teachings of the community contain a gnosis for the initiated. They also contain a dualism of a type, and there are concepts and vocabulary which appear to hold a common bond to both Gnosticism and the New Testament. There are, consequently, those who believe the community's influence was not small on such men as Paul.

I now turn to these materials, imposing the same pattern of categories on them as those previously used.

1. Cosmogony and Theology

As one would expect because of the direct relation of Qumran to Judaism, areas of cosmogony reveal concepts which are very much like those of orthodox Judaism and early Christianity.

The cosmogony and theology are rather intricately inter-woven. In contrast to much of what has been seen of the gnostic view of the God of the Old Testament, the

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[125] GEC, p. 39.

Qumran God of the Fathers[126] is the Creator of the earth and its laws.[127] "All that is and ever was comes from a God of knowledge. . . . Before things came into existence He determined the plan of them. . . . Nothing can be changed. In His hand lies the government of all things."[128] The extent of His responsibility for world order is somewhat surprising, for in that order, God created the spirits of light and darkness, making them the basis for every act.[129] There is also present that which resembles a hierarchy of spiritual beings in the spheres of light and darkness. There are the prince of lights, and the angel of darkness. Further, *The War of the Sons of Darkness and the Sons of Light* speaks of Gabriel[130] and Sariel, or Uriel,[131] while *The Manual of Discipline* speaks of Raphael.[132] On the other hand, Belial is cursed,

> for his invidious schemes . . . and all the spirits of his ilk for their wicked designs made Belial, and the angel of hostility. All his dominion is in darkness . . . All the spirits that are associated with him are but angels of destruction.[133]

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[126] *The Way of the Sons of Darkness and the Sons of Light*, 13:7. [Hereafter referred to as WSDSL].

[127] Ibid., 10:12.

[128] Manual of Discipline, 3:13ff. [Hereafter referred to as MD].

[129] Ibid., 3:25-26.

[130] WSDSL, 9:16.

[131] MD, 9:15.

[132] Ibid.

[133] WSDSL, 13:1-5.

There is then in the natural order a sort of ethical dualism which is in some way not altogether clearly attributed to God.

2. Anthropology and Soteriology

What is man's relation to this state of nature? The words of Burrows are indicative, when he says that in Qumran theology the doctrines of man and sin are in fact one doctrine.[134]

There is no mention as to how man came to possess his nature, but it is clear that he is sinful and weak. Men are divided basically into two groups: the sons of light and the sons of darkness. The division is entirely dependent upon God's election of him. There are passages which call for the exercise of right choice,[135] and yet it is apparent that man simply does no possess that ability apart from the electing grace of a sovereign God. For example,

> A man's way is not established except by the spirit which God created for him.[136] For what is man? . . . What can I plan unless Thou hast desired it, and what can I think apart from Thy will? What can I accomplish unless Thou hast established me, and how can I be wise unless Thou openest my mouth?[137]

It is also apparent that although he is a son of light, he is still subject to the powers of darkness over which, however, he is victorious through the help of God, "To those whom God chose He has given them as an eternal possession . . . And all the spirits alloted to him strive to trip the sons of light; but the God of Israel and His angel of truth have helped all the sons of light."[138]

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[134] Millar Burrows, More Light on the Dead Sea Scrolls (New York: The Viking Press, 1958), p. 290. [Hereafter referred to as MLDSS].

[135] MD, 916 ff.

[136] The Book of Hymns, 4:31.

[137] Ibid., 3:22.

3. Morality

Once a man became a member of the group, he was expected to maintain a high level of morality. He was "to enter into a covenant in the presence of all fellow-volunteers in the cause and to commit himself by a binding oath to abide with all his heart and soul by the commandments of the Law of Moses, as that Law is revealed to the sons of Zadok." Again, it calls for:

> All who declare their willingness to serve God's truth must bring all of their mind, all of their strength, and all of their wealth into the community of God, so that their minds may be purified by the truth of His precepts, their strength controlled by His perfect ways, and their wealth disposed in accordance with His just design. They must not deviate by a single step from carrying out the orders of God at the times appointed for them. . . . They must not turn aside from the ordinances of God's truth either to the right or to the left.[139]

Those of Qumran were clearly not antinomian.

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[138] MD, 11:7; 3:24, 25.

[139] Ibid., 5:7 ff.

4. Eschatology

There is no systematic account of the beliefs of Qumran in this category, but the following aspects seem to be a part of their views. The present time, classified as the days of the dominion of Belial,[140] and characterized by a conflict between the sons of darkness and the sons of light, seems to culminate in a war between these two groups. The outcome of this appears to be a time when truth will emerge triumphant for the world, being evinced perpetually, and atonement will be made for the earth, an atonement more effective than any burnt offering or sacrifice could attain. Then, when every spirit of perversity in man has been destroyed, God will sprinkle on him the spirit of truth and he will be enabled to have an understanding of transcendental knowledge.[141] For the sons of darkness, on the other hand, this culmination brings the hour of judgment, the final inquisition, when God will destroy perversity forever and truth will emerge triumphant. It will be a time when God will purge all the acts of man in the crucible of His truth, refining all the fabric of man, destroying every spirit of perversity from within his flesh, cursing him beyond hope of mercy, and damn him in the gloom of eternal fire.

There is disagreement among the scholars whether those of Qumran believed in a resurrection. Some hold that the Scrolls reflect a belief in the immortality of the soul alone, holding the body as mortal and corrupt. Others contend that some of the language infers a bodily resurrection, this language, however, is not without challenge.[142] As Professor Burrows points out, this disagreement is not found only among contemporary scholars, but it is also found in the early accounts of Josephus who attributes to the Essenes a belief that the body was corruptible and mortal, and Hippolytus who describes them as holding a belief in the reuniting of the soul and body in a resurrection.[143]

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[140] Ibid., 2:19.

[141] Ibid., 3:13-4:26.

5. Summary Regarding the Scrolls of Qumran

To summarize the views of Qumran in our categories, we note a cosmogony and theology which are quite Biblical. An absolutely sovereign God is the sole creator of heaven and earth and allows the activities of darkness for a time. Consequently, there is a dualism which is essentially ethical, and which becomes the main factor in the scene of man's activities.

Man is a weak sinner dependent entirely upon the sovereign grace of God to enable him to receive the benefits of election, and to take his place among the sons of light. The outward expression of this becomes his identification with the Qumran community, as a member of which he is called upon to attain an extremely high moral standard, definitely not antinomian.

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[142] Burrows, MLDSS, pp. 344-346.

[143] Ibid.

The community saw history as culminating in a mighty conflict in which the sons of light would emerge victorious, be rewarded, and attain a knowledge of the transcendental which they were hitherto unable to receive. The sons of darkness, to the contrary, would be consigned to eternal judgment. Apparently a new order would follow.

E. A Summary of the Retrogressive Survey

The survey of materials has led from the second century A.D. back through the first century and into the first century B.C. The materials have possessed various common denominators. It is not legitimate simply to compare these positions, extract some common views, and assume an organic relationship which clearly marks the development of a movement. Gnosticism knew no such organic unity. The survey, however, is still of considerable value, for, although there may be no organic unity in these groups, the common denominators still testify to the presence of basic concepts and language which reveal a manner of trying to understand the world and life. Though it may not be possible to demonstrate an organic unity, it is possible to observe a prevelent pattern and it is possible to partially characterize concepts present in the times of Paul, concepts which may well have exercised an influence upon him in one way or another.

At the end of each section there has been a summarization of the positions of each of the groups studied. Now a general summary will attempt to focus as clearly as possible the "movement" toward the second century crystallization of Gnosticism. Anticipating the analysis of Paul's position, it is hoped that as concise a view as possible of the concepts of the gnostic position can be shown. In an effort to appreciate any "development," I shall reverse the chronological order followed in the retrogressive survey and begin this summary with the Qumran Community, working back toward the second century.

1. The Cosmogonies

Qumran's cosmogony attributes all that exists to God. Its monotheistic view presents One who is absolutely sovereign over all His creation, and who being responsible for all which exists, in His sovereignty allows evil. It presents an ethical dualism. A part of this appears to be a two-fold spiritual hierarchy. Man's state in nature then is one of conflict between light and darkness, powers which not only help or hinder, but control his life in accordance with each individual's divinely assigned lot.[144]

The cosmogonies of those against whom the New Testament materials surveyed were written, are inferred from the polemic against them and consequently are subject to difference of opinion. It would appear, however, in both

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[144] Burrows, MLDSS, p. 280.

Paul and John that the opposition is to a group holding a view that matter is evil, and that there appears to be a spiritual hierarchy of the sort we noted in the second century heretics.

The documents we surveyed from the Nag Hammadi texts leave no doubt regarding the hostility of the natural order to man. The world's origin was from the Father (The Gospel of Truth) and the Light (The Gospel of Thomas). Exactly how the natural state then became hostile to man is not developed. It may be somewhat the same as the sovereignty-concept of the Dead Sea Scrolls in The Gospel of Truth, whereas in The Gospel of Thomas there is the possible inference of the idea of a demiurge to account for the state.

Nearly all the second century heretics held to some type of lesser power to whom evil was attributed in one manner or another. Man with his spirit-matter conflict was his product as was the entire state of nature.

2. The Theologies

The theology of Qumran is a strict monotheism in which the creator of the universe is absolute sovereign.

It is difficult to be specific regarding the New Testament heretics against whom Paul and John wrote; however, from the emphasis placed upon Christ's humanity, and the worship of angels, it is possible to assume they held a view somewhat akin to the gnostic's Father-above-all, and a hierarchy of lesser spiritual beings through which one must go to know the Father. There is here as in Qumran a rejection of the traditional trinitarian view.

In considering the Nag Hammadi The Gospel of Truth, a theology with a somewhat Biblical orientation was discovered. It contained a Trinity: the ineffable Father, the Son - regarding whose humanity there is some question, and the Holy Spirit - though there is question regarding the attribute of personality. The Gospel of Thomas similarly speaks of all the members of the Trinity, but also appears to posit the possibility of an inferior god of much the same order as the Jewish Old Testament god of the second century heretics' view.

Finally, the second century heretics held to some sort of a hierarchy which emanated from the God-above-all. Christ is usually second in the order, head of all the created beings of the God-above-all. Invariably the god of the Old Testament is of a much lower order, and is responsible for the blunder of the world of matter.

3. The Anthropologies

Qumran designates man as totally depraved and unable to know redemption apart from the grace of God. Mankind is in two categories: the elect who by grace are saved from this depravity, and those not elect who will remain in their sinful state. An exact definition of the place of the body in their doctrine is impossible to attain at the present.

It seems to be inferred that the heresies against which John and Paul wrote held a low view of the body, and possibly held to a view of man similar to that of the second century heretics.

The Gospels of Nag Hammadi also contain this low view of the body and sex. Man is in a state where apart from his "coming into the light" he is in complete ignorance about God.

The second century heretics invariably present a view of man's body as the product of an inferior, bungling demiurge. He does possess, however, some spark of divine light.

4. The Soteriologies

In Qumran's view, salvation by grace is brought to sinful, weak, but elect men. Through the sovereign direction of God, man is in one manner or another brought to accept the views of Qumran, illuminated and endued with special understanding, and enters the covenant. He is then instructed in correct behaviour, and fulfills the covenant requirements.

From what John and Paul wrote against the New Testament heretics, it would seem that these heretics also taught that salvation came by means of secret knowledge which enables one to know God. This appears more clearly in Paul where they may have proposed that access to God was through the mediation of angels. The kind of thing taught in the second-century heretics can certainly be inferred as a danger which was present for those to whom John wrote.

In the Nag Hammadi Gospels we surveyed, The Gospel of Truth emphasizes a secret knowledge which the individual receives from God who reveals Himself to the elect. The knowledge enables man properly to understand himself and his purpose of life. The Gospel of Thomas also emphasizes salvation as a self knowledge which is attained by some means far from ordinary knowledge and learning.

The second-century heretics though basically uniform in their view of salvation, present some variation. Essentially, however, salvation amounts to deliverance from the bondage of matter, ultimately from its sphere completely. This was usually achieved through some special teacher whose instruction of secret knowledge enabled one to achieve self-understanding. In each case the true disciples were the elect. There was an unanimous rejection of the traditional view of the church's doctrine of Christ's atoning death.

5. The Moralities

This particular category is more easily summarized. Qumran called for a morality on an extremely high level. The New Testament heresies we surveyed seem to allow for an antinomianism. In the Nag Hammadi texts, though The Gospel of Truth is somewhat less clear, The Gospel of Thomas calls for a rather high standard. The second century heretics composed a dichotomy of antinomianism and asceticism.

6. The Eschatologies

The eschatology of Qumran clearly called for a culmination in history which was to be marked by a battle between the sons of light and darkness. The victory of light would then bring in a new order.

The New Testament heretics' position in this category is really unobtainable even by inference. There is simply no allusion on which any implications can be based.

In the Nag Hammadi texts, The Gospel of Thomas, though not extensive in detail of last things, does seem to present a cataclysmic culmination to history. The Gospel of Truth is even more difficult to characterize in this category.

The second century heretics almost without exception call for a culmination of events in the deliverance of the elect from the world of matter, and a reuniting with the God-above-all in a purely spiritual sphere.

7. Summary

One may then note some basic factors present in these various groups.

In cosmogonies, there is in each group an association of evil with matter, though this may be somewhat questionable with the Dead Sea Scrolls. Also, with the exception of the Dead Sea Scrolls, there is a spiritual hierarchy of some manner, though this is implied in The Gospel of Thomas of the Nag Hammadi texts.

Theologically, excepting the Dead Sea Scrolls, there appears to be a hierarchy in each of these groups. There is a rejection of the traditional doctrine of the Trinity in them all, and a denial of the humanity of the Christ in the New Testament heretics, the Nag Hammadi Gospels, and the second century heretics.

The anthropologies of each of them show man possessing the spirit-matter conflict, in a state of nature essentially against his better interests. In the soteriologies, all but the Dead Sea Scrolls have a secret knowledge essential to salvation in some manner. The disciples are elect.

The moralities of all but the dead Sea Scroll community are of a low nature. This must be qualified, however, because of the presence of some ascetic groups in the second century heretics.

In the eschatologies there is present in all, some sort of culmination in history. All excepting the Dead Sea Scrolls seem to imply some sense of deliverance from this world and matter. The Dead Sea Scrolls seem to teach a renewed kingdom on this earth.

Mythology seems to be more evident in the second century. We observed a more modified form in the Nag Hammadi texts surveyed, and a more radical form in the writings of the second century heretics. There is no basis for judgment of the New Testament heretics.

CHAPTER II

A SELECT SURVEY OF PAUL'S VIEWS

An attempt has been made in chapter one to reconstruct what the essential beliefs of the early gnostics may have been.

In chapter two, attention will be turned to Paul. Use will be made of the same categories which will be applied to select passages of Paul's writings. An effort has been made to choose more pertinent, representative passages rather than try to be exhaustive. The purpose of the chapter will be an attempt to construct the essence of Paul's beliefs. It will then be possible to compare and contrast Paul and the early gnostics.

A. Cosmogony and Cosmology

It will be necessary to study several passages from different letters of Paul in order to establish his views, inasmuch as Paul's materials are letters dealing essentially with church problems and are therefore not theological essays.

1. The Hierarchy of Deity

One of the basic passages revealing Paul's views on cosmogony is found in Colossians 1:15-17:

> He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation: for in Him all things were created in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or authorities - all things were created through Him and for Him. He is before all things and in Him all things hold together.

Paralleling much of what has been observed in gnostic cosmogonies, the passage first of all confronts one with the concept of an "invisible" God. This expression suggests to many commentators a connotation that goes beyond the idea of physical invisibility to the idea of an "unknowable." Lightfoot remarks, "The epithet aoratou however must not be confined to the apprehension of the bodily senses, but will include the cognisance of the inward eye also."[1]

The passage also appears to present, as in the previous cosmogonies, another deity through whom the creating is accomplished. Here the expression describing this Son, whom Paul sets forth as Christ, is "the image (eikon) of the invisible God." The precise meaning and implications of this will be developed in the category of Paul's theology. The purpose here is simply to note Paul's view of the origin of the universe.

It should be noted also that Paul in no way speaks of Christ as the image of God because He was created by the invisible God. In fact it would appear from Philippians

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[1] J. B. Lightfoot, Saint Paul's Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon (London: MacMillan & Co., 1890), p. 143). [Hereafter referred to as SPECP].

2:5 (which will be considered more fully under theology) that Paul understood Christ's pre-existence as eternal. The Colossian passage then would not imply the idea of the unknowable God bringing into being a subordinate who then became responsible for creation.

Christ is referred to here as the "firstborn" (prototokos) of all creation. This term does not at all require the interpretation of Christ being the earliest among other created beings. This point will also be discussed more fully, however, under the category of theology.

Whatever belief Paul held regarding Christ's Person, this passage very clearly attributes the creation to Christ. For Paul the beginnings of all things (ta panta) had their source in Christ Jesus. He specifies that the "all things" include those beings in the heavens as well as upon the earth, the visible and the invisible things, whether thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or authorities.

Regarding the expression, "all things" (ta panta), Lightfoot points out that we must understand not "all things severally" but rather "all things collectively." He says, "With very few exceptions, wherever this phrase occurs elsewhere, it stands in a similar connection."[2] The phrase "in the heavens and on the earth" is quite in parallel with the thought of Genesis 1:1, "God made the heavens and the earth" (epoieser ho theos ton ouranoin kai ten gen).

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[2] Ibid., p. 149.

By "visible and invisible," Paul is probably referring to "things material or immaterial."[3] "Thrones" is of course used of earthly rule, but likewise belongs to the highest grade of angelic beings whose place is in the immediate presence of God.[4] "Dominions" (_kuriotetes_) appears to refer to those standing next in dignity to the _thronoi_. "Principalities" (_archal_) and "authorities" (_exousiai_) are terms sometimes designating human dignities as in Luke 12:11 and Titus 3:1, and at other times of spiritual hierarchies, good ones, as in Ephesians 3:10, and later in Colossians 2:10; also bad ones, as in Ephesians 6:12.

For a true evaluation of this passage and a sense of what Paul's cosmogony was, it is of course essential that every effort be made to understand why Paul is saying what he does. It is questionable if his purpose was the clear statement of his cosmogony. It is more probably related to a polemic against the heresy with which he is dealing in this letter. In chapter one it was noted that the heresy involved in the Colossian letter seemed to include some type of Jewish Gnosticism which appears to have taught the worship of angels. Paul's point throughout would seem to be that of assuring the believer of the certain security and accessibility to God--present and future--in Christ Jesus.

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[3] Ibid., p. 150.

[4] Ibid., p. 152.

He was not only victorious over all these spiritual forces in His redeeming activity on the cross (2:15), but as Paul shows here, Christ Jesus is the creator of any power there may be in any sphere of being. He is their sovereign, and they are consequently subject to His rule. Proper relationship to Christ Jesus would then render superfluous any concern over the worship of lesser rulers. Lightfoot speaking to this point states:

> He brushes away all these speculations without inquiring how much or how little truth there may be in them, because they are altogether beside the question. His language here shows the same spirit of impatience with this elaborate angelology, as in 2:18.[5]

Ephesians 1:21, a parallel thought, speaks of Christ as sitting "far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come." The phrase here, pantios onomatos onomazomenou, carries the force of "every dignity or title (whether real or imaginary) which is reverenced."[6]

This is not to say that Paul did not actually hold to spiritual beings of various sorts. On the other hand it would seem to be going farther than necessary to attribute to Paul essentially the same position held by those against whom he is writing. All this passage can be made to say is that whatever thrones, dominions, principalities, or authorities there are - visible or invisible, Christ Jesus is their creator.

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[5] Ibid., p. 150.

[6] Ibid., p. 150.

Several other passages which state more positively what Paul holds in this sphere are II Corinthians 4:4 and Ephesians 6:12. Taken together, they seem to portray a position which holds to a spiritual power (ho theos) of this world[7] and a hierarchy beneath Him which is evil and in opposition to the trinity.

The Ephesian list is rather difficult to identify specifically, though it is a hierarchy. Translated in the RSV as principalities and powers, the words arke and exousia have a fairly wide range of meaning in literature. In the New Testament arke in such a context as this is regularly translated "principality," and similarly exousia is consistently translated "power," or "authority." It is difficult to associate them with any specific order in a hierarchy of power or establish accurate distinctions in the terms as they are used. Similarly, it is difficult to establish the exact beings which Paul would describe as the kosmokrator of this present darkness. This lone New Testament reference of the word is in the plural. The word is applied in antiquity e.g. to Zeus, Mithras, Isis, as well as in astrology to rulers of the cosmos.[8] The phrase quite literally is not "against the world rulers of this present darkness" as in the RSV, but simply "the *kosmokrator* *of this* darkness."[9]

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[7] RSV: Greek - aionos

[8] Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, A Greek-English Lexicon (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1948), p. 984. [Hereafter referred to as AGEL].

Although specific identification and order cannot be given to these terms as Paul uses them, the context makes perfectly clear his reference is to various classes of hostile spirits against which the Christian must contend. He states in 6:12 that it is not against flesh and blood (*pros haima kai sarka*; literally "blood and flesh"), it is rather against "the spiritual hosts (*pneumatika)* of evil in the heavenly places (*epouranious*)."

The Corinthian reference (II Cor. 4:4) would seem to add to this picture, the reality of a ruler over this hierarchy. Paul here speaks of "the god of this world" (literally: *tou aioonos tautou*, or this "age," in contrast to *cosmos*. The significance is one there of temporal connotation; "*aeon*," instead of "order," "cosmos") who has "blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ" (II Cor. 4:4). This phrase occurs only here. It would appear from the Ephesians and Corinthian references that there was common opposition to the activity of the true God, and the singular number in the Corinthian passages would appear to establish the structure of a single ruler under whom the various powers stood.

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[9] Paul uses the word, *pantocrater*, one of the ten times it is used in the New Testament - II Cor. 6:18; all other nine times are in Rev. 1:8; 4:8; 11:17; 15:3; 16:7, 14; 19:6, 16; 21:22.

The expression ho theos (God) is found in rabbinical writings as a reference to Satan. Vincent presents several of these: "The first God is the true God; but the second god is Samael. The matron said, 'Our god is greater than thy god; for when thy god appeared unto Moses in the bush, he hid his face; when, however, he saw the serpent, which is my god, he fled.'"[10] Similarly in the Ascension of Isaiah Beliar is twice called "the ruler of this world."[11]

Although this is the only place in the New Testament where this particular expression occurs, there are other expressions in the New Testament which are related to Paul's use of this term. In Matthew 12:24 Christ speaks of Beelzebub as prince (archon) of the devils (daimonion). In nearly an identical expression Christ says in John 12:31, "Now shall the ruler (archon) of this world (tou kosmou) be cast out," and in John 14:30 the same expression is found as well as John 16:11. Plummer in International Critical Commentary comments, "In all these cases Satan is meant, and in harmony with these passages St. John says that the whole kosmos i.e. the whole of the moral and intellectual universe so far as it is estranged from God, lies in the power of the evil one. This does not mean that God abdicates or surrenders any portion of His dominion to Satan, but that those to whom

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[10] Marvin R. Vincent, Word Studies in the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Wm. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1946), III, 310-311.

[11] X. 11, 12.

He has granted free will place themselves under the power of darkness. Here it is not this *koopuas, mundus*, but *ho auton houtos seculum* that is said to have Satan for its god. During the time--believed by St. Paul to be short--which would elapse before the coming of the Lord, Satan reigned wherever there was opposition to the will of God."[12]

Paul speaks frequently of *ho auton houtos* I Corinthians 1:20; 2:6, 8; 3:8; Romans 12:2; Ephesians 1:21 - *ho nun aion* I Timothy 6:17; II Timothy 4:10; Titus 2:12 - *ho nun kairos* Romans 3:26, 8:18, 11:5.

> It is startling to find one who had all his life held idolatry in abomination, and been zealous for the glory of the one true god, using this *grandis et horribil descriptis Satanae* (Being), and electing to apply the term *Θεός* to the arch-enemy of God and mankind; but what he says about the worship of demons (see I Cor. 10:25) is some explanation of his men.[13]

It seems quite clear, then, that Paul's cosmogony contained a view of evil spiritual beings who were in opposition to the Trinity as well as to the believers, and that there was in some fashion a hierarchy among them over which was the god of his aeon, or the devil (Diabolos; Eph. 6:11).

The origin of these beings, however, is a mystery insofar as Paul's writings are concerned. It is of course possible to attribute to him some common view of the day in which he lived, but from his own pen we have no explanation.

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[12] Alfred Plummer, *II Corinthians*, *International Critical Commentary* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1912), p. 114. [Hereafter referred to as ICC].

[13] Ibid., p. 115.

2. Structure of the Universe

All of this suggests yet another concept in cosmogony. In Ephesians 6:12 the phrase, "in heavenly places" (in tois epouranois) and in Ephesians 2:2, the phrase, "the prince of the power of the air" (ton archon tes exousias tou aeros) combine with a reference in II Corinthians 11:2, "I know a man . . . who . . . was caught up into the third heaven (tritou ouranou) . . . caught up into Paradise," to present a further facet of Paul's cosmogony.

What was Paul's concept of the cosmology of the creation? The Corinthian passage is the one which is perhaps the most promising for an answer to this question.

> I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven - whether in the body or out of the body I do not know. God knows. And I know that this man was caught up into Paradise - whether in the body or out of the body I do not know. God knows - and he heard things that cannot be told, which man may not utter (I Cor. 12:2-4).

There is no great treatise here, but there is certainly an allusion to that which Paul believed regarding structure of the universe. Although there is a difference of opinion on the number of experiences described in this passage, the thing of concern is the references to the "third heaven" (tritou ouranou), "Paradise" (tou paradeison), and the relation between them. Are there two experiences and consequently a distinction between the third heaven and Paradise, or are they simply the same? Plummer observes that, in contrast to many of the church Fathers, Clement of Alexandria held them as two separate spheres: "In this he is followed by few moderns, who for the most part adopt ~~the~~ view that St. Paul is speaking throughout of only one experience, and that 'paradise' is equivalent to the 'third heaven.'"[14]

The important thing here is, what did Paul mean by this? Did he hold to a three-storied universe? Was this nearly half way up the seven-sphere ladder of some of the first century Jewish contemporaries of Paul, and do we thereby conclude he held to a cosmology akin to that in The Book of the Secrets of Enoch (8:1-6), or the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs (Levi 2-3)?

It is certainly true that Paul does not find it necessary to define this term for the Corinthians, but this is hardly sufficient cause to insist that a naive, prescientific conception of the universe is necessarily represented by this statement. Along with the cosmologies of the gnostics, and the Apocryphal and Pseudepigraphal literature, there were other interpretations of the heavens.

Regarding Deuteronomy 10:14, e.g., "Behold to the Lord your God belong heaven and the heaven of heavens, the earth with all that is in it," Philo comments, "Do you not know that to God belongs both the heaven perceived by sense and that known to thought alone, which may quite properly be called the 'heaven of heavens,' against the earth and its contents and all the universe, both the visible and the invisible, and immaterial, the pattern of the invisible"?[15]

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[14] Ibid., p. 344.

The relationship of Philo to Jewish orthodoxy in contrast to theological positions represented in Apocryphal writings is shown by Bentwich as follows:

> Philo, then, appears in the direct line of the tradition which from the time of the Great Synagogue was disseminated in two channels - Palestine and Alexandria. He developed the national Jewish theology in a literary form, which made it available for the world, but with him the tradition as a Jewish tradition ends; in its further Hellenistic development it departed entirely from its original principles.[16]

Further, it should be noted that canonical Scriptures, Old or New Testament, nowhere even so much as hint at the seven heavens of the Apocryphal literature.

When the writer of Hebrews (and despite the debate regarding the authorship of this letter, there is agreement that many concepts are Pauline-like) speaks in 4:14, of having, "a great high priest who has passed through the heavens" (*dieleluthota tous ouranous*); and in 7:26, of "a high priest . . . exalted above the heavens," (*hupsteloteios tou ouranou genomenos*), and still further in the letter, 9:24 says, "For Christ has entered not into a sanctuary made with hands, a copy of the true one, but into heaven itself (all *eis autou*

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[15] The Special Laws, I:302.

[16] Norman Bentwich Philo-*Judaeus of Alexandria* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1910), pp. 201-202.

tou ouranou), now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf"; it must have been obvious even to him of the several locations in which he had placed Christ Jesus. Were there others besides Philo, who recognized the need for finiteness to struggle with metaphorical terms attempting to relate the transcendental? Could Paul not have held to a view like the universe of Genesis, of the atmosphere and stellar firmament (Genesis 1:6-8, 14), in which case a third heaven was that of the spiritual realm? Genesis, after all, posits the presence of God before the creation of the universe, and represents God as immanently revealing Himself to man.[17]

The point to be made, I believe, is that exegetically it seems unnecessary to assume this term "third heaven" demands that Paul hold to a three- or seven-storied universe in his cosmology.

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[17] The dual form *shamayim* indicates a two-fold visible heaven; H. J. Schoeps, *Paul* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1959), p. 38, points to Paul's constant reference to Biblical basis for his arguments in which even the abolition of the Law is proved from the OT; Johannes Munck, "Pauline Research Since Scweitzer," *The Bible in Modern Scholarship*, J. Philip Hyath, ed., (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1965), pp. 166-169. Reacting against the Tubingen school's position speaks against the ~~judgment~~ that texts outside of the NT are nearer and more important than NT documents. Certainly extra-Biblical materials are to be studied, "but our primary concern must be to read and study the NT as a whole which can explain itself much better than it can be explained by far-fetched parallels which have their day, but will be forgotten tomorrow."

That there were Jewish groups who held this idea has been demonstrated by references to Apocryphal and Pseudepigraphe writing. That all Jewish people of the first century so believed is, of course, to press the point further than is justified as is demonstrated from Philo and the writer of Hebrews.

To this point, then, we may conclude Paul's cosmogony and cosmology show that which is found in Genesis. There is an atmospheric and a stellar heaven, not necessarily a three-storied or seven-storied view held by some, and a very clear belief in an evil hierarchy which is in opposition to the activity of God and the church.

There is yet another passage containing some insight into Paul's cosmology:

> For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God; . . . and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait for the adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies (Rom. 8:19 and 23).

The passage suggests that the universe has been subjected to futility (mataioteti he ktisis hupetage) by God and is eagerly longing (apokaradokia) for the cataclysmic time when the believer's body will be redeemed (v. 23 ten apolistrosin tou somatos) for when that transpires it will be set free (elentherothesetai) from its bondage of decay (apo tes douleras tes phthoras) and obtain the glorious liberty (eis ten elentherian tes doxes) of the children of God.

According to this passage, Paul believed the universe made by God, was in a state of futility (mateios) and the bondage of decay (douleias tes phthoras).

Paul's view in all probability relates this to the account of man's "fall" in Genesis 3:17-18, "Cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth to you; and you shall eat the plants of the field."

The expression, "futility" would seem to be in parallel to the "bondage of decay," and it is significant that the remedy of creation is conjoined with the redemption of man's body. This would certainly seem to be a reference to what Paul anticipates at the parousia of Christ Jesus. Philippians 3:20-21 states, "But our commonwealth is in heaven and from it we await a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will change our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power which enables him to subject all things to himself." Similarly, in I Corinthians 15:51-54:

> Lo! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. For this perishable nature must put on the imperishable, and this mortal nature must put on immortality. When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory."

The passage in Romans seems to be the only allusion of Paul to the state of nature, and in it Paul seems to attribute the character of the state of nature as part of a judgment connected with man's fall.

An interesting parallel exists in II Esdras 7:11-12, "I made the world for their sakes (Israel's), and when Adam transgressed my statutes what has now happened was decreed; and the ways of entering this world were made narrow, grievous, and toilsome, and few and evil, full of dangers and burdened with hardships."

Paul then seems to hold that nature's present state is one of futility. That it was not always in such a state would seem to be implied by the statement, "For the creation was subjected to futility not of its own will but by the will of him who subjected it in hope" (8:20). The expression "of its own will" (ouch hekousa - quite literally "not voluntarily") is of course a personification of nature. The implication of all this seems to simply be that nature was not originally in its present state of futility, according to Paul, but that God is responsible for the way things are. It is of course here, as later discussion will more fully show, that a decided contrast of Paul's views and the gnostic position exists. Paul has no reason for developing the view fully in this place and speaks in a manner that would seem to assume the reader's understanding of his description. It is not unreasonable to assume that Paul related the present state to the "fall" in the Genesis account.

B. Paul's Theology

A full examination of Paul's views on theology is not in accord with the intent of the paper. The material here then will be limited to the significant features of deity necessary for a comparison with the gnostic view, in Chapter III.

As has been seen in the various gnostic concepts there was some view of a God who was above and beyond all else - spiritual beings, men and the world. It was He who in one way or another created a spiritual hierarchy of secondary gods from which come the creation of the universe and mankind. What were Paul's views in this regard?

The Father-of-all of the gnostic groups was known fully only to the second member of the hierarchy, Thought-word, who was the Father's thought. There is in Paul a sense in which our knowledge of God is extremely limited.[18] On the other hand, the God who is above all is for Paul a Being whom man can come to know. Man can know about God, and man can realize a communion with this God. He is not beyond mankind to be known only when one has finally escaped all limitations of the prison body, and successfully passed through the spheres controlled by the secondary spiritual beings. Knowledge of God, for Paul, insofar as His eternal power and deity are concerned, can be gained through His creative activity (Rom. 1:20). Paul certainly does not understand this God to be the imperfect Jehovah

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[18] cf. I Cor. 2:11: "For what person knows a man's thoughts except the spirit of the man which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God," I Cor. 13:12: "Now I know in part, but then I shall understand fully."

Creator of the Old Testament, but as the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 1:7; Eph. 1:3). Nor is the knowledge simply an assent to intellectual or metaphysical truths. In Galatians 4:9, Paul states, "but now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God." Burton urges us to understand that this knowledge cannot simply refer to knowledge in a purely theoretical or intellectual sense, but must mean here that the Galatians had become objects of God's favorable attention.[19] Paul speaks of this communion in Ephesians 4:6, "one God and Father of us all, who is above all, and through all and in all," (*plerothete eis to pleroma tou theou*). That the fullness of God is an experiential thing is evident from the context which relates this experience to "Christ dwelling in the believer's heart, and comprehending the love of Christ" (vv. 17, 18). For Paul, then, though God is above all in His transcendence, He is nevertheless immanent, in all, and knowable.

For Paul there is no spiritual hierarchy of gods. Paul writes:

> There is no God but one. For although there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth--as indeed there are many "gods" and many "lords"--yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist." (I Cor. 8:5, 6)

In parallel with this, I Thessalonians 1:9 states, "how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God" (quite literally, to *the* God - God *living* and *true*).

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[19] Burton, ICC, p. 229.

Moffatt suggests that the Corinthians knew the cry in shrines of deities like Serapis, "there is one God, Serapis, no one like Him!" Against such doctrines, Paul is stating God alone is the Father, the Creator of the universe and the end for His people, that the world was made by Him and we for Him and that this divine purpose from beginning to end works through the one Lord, Jesus Christ. Such a view of the Father-of-all is quite in contrast to that of the gnostics. What exists is clearly the consequence of God through Jesus Christ.

The expression in this passage, "and one Lord Jesus Christ" in its opposition to "many lords" is likewise significant for Paul's theology. Instead of Son of Man, which Greeks would not understand, Paul preferred to use Lord for the royal heavenly being of Jesus as risen. God had been hailed as God of Gods and Lord of Lords in the Greek Bible (Sam. 2:47; Ps. 136:2, 3; Sam. 10:17). Christ is thus Lord of all so-called lords in the pagan supernatural universe. The expression is not in opposition to God but to the lords worshipped in Hellenistic cults. "For Paul the one lord is vitally one with the one God." The title probably originally denoted to the early Christian community an approximation of Christ as divine Son or Servant, expressing His close tie to the Father as the revealer of God's will. Jesus as Lord, as the risen and reigning Son of God, mediates fellowship with God in all its power and prospects as

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nothing else can do. So vital is this faith to the apostle that he uses it to rule out any possible participation in other "lord-cults." Faith in God meant in a real sense faith in the Son of God.[20]

At this juncture of considering Paul's theology the point which seems to be made in Romans 8:9, 10 should also be considered:

> But you are not in the flesh, you are in the Spirit, if the Spirit of God really dwells in you. Any one who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to Him. But if Christ is in you, although your bodies are dead because of sin, your spirits are alive because of righteousness.

As can be seen, Paul seems to equate the Spirit, the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and Christ dwelling in the believer, as being one and the same Person.[21] This along with such passages as Galatians 4:6, "God both sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts" and Ephesians 2:22, assuming this is Pauline in source, "in whom you also are built into it for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit," seem to project the traditional trinitarian view as that which Paul held in his theology.

To turn the study of this category a facet toward his Christology is again to see that which is distinct from the usual gnostic view. Perhaps several of the most significant references in this respect would be Philippians 2:6 and Colossians 1:15-18; 2:9.

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[20] James Moffatt, Vol. on I Corinthians, Moffatt's New Testament Commentary (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishing, N.D.), pp. 107, 108.

[21] cf. also v. 11 speaks of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you.

In Philippians 2:5-11, is a passage subject to a diversity of opinion. It is a passage, the context of which should constantly be borne in mind, for Paul's purpose does not appear to be so much a studied presentation of the doctrine of the Person of Christ as it is an exhortation to humility. His impression of or belief regarding Christ's Person cannot be disregarded or devaluated on this account, neither can it be unduly pressed. It would certainly seem legitimate to regard the passage as proper source of Paul's Christology, however.

> Have this mind among yourselves, which you have in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of man. And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Phil. 2:5-11)

The first significant phrase in this passage for analysis is, "who, though he was in the form of God." The verbal form here is a present participle (huparchon) and stands in sharp contrasts with the aorists forms following it. As such, it is certainly capable of connoting a continuance of being. Vincent in the International Critical Commentary believes it suggests the idea of "subsisting" or "though he subsisted," and translates the passage then, "For he, though he existed from eternity in a state of equality with God."[22] Lightfoot says, "The word denotes 'prior existence,' but not necessarily 'eternal existence.' The latter idea however, follows in the present instance from the conception of the divinity of Christ which the context supposes."[23]

The adverbial phrase "in the form of God (en morphe theou)" is, of course, highly significant here. It is important to note in the passage that "in the form of God" is in contrast to the phrases "taking the form of a servant" (morphen doulou labon), also, "being born in the likeness of men" (en homoimati arthropon genomenos) v. 7, and "being found in human form" (schemati heuretheis hos anthropes) v. 8. "Morphe" and "schema" at times can both have the meaning of "outward appearance, form, shape."[24] Whatever being "in the form of God" means, it is in fundamental contrast to the expression, "form of a servant" which is then further described by "human form" (schema) and "likeness of men" (homoioma). The words Morphe and schema have been subject to rather extensive scrutiny by

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[22] Marvin R. Vincent, Philippians Vol. of the International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1961), p. 57.

[23] J. B. Lightfoot, St. Paul's Epistle to the Philippians (London: Mac Millan & Co., 1873), p. 108. [Hereafter referred to as SPEP].

[24] Liddell & Scott, AGEL; Arndt & Gingrich, GELNT.

J. B. Lightfoot,[25] after which he concludes that the use of the words in both classical and New Testament Greek give schema the connotation of instability or changeableness (e.g. I Cor. 7:31, the fashion of this world passes away, etc., e.g. also Rom. 12:2, I Pet. 1-4), while on the other hand the great and entire change of the inner life, otherwise described as being born again, being created anew, is spoken of as a conversion of Morphe always and never of schema (e.g. Gal. 4:19 until Christ be formed in you: cf. also Rom. 8:20 and 12:2; Phil. 3:10; II Cor. 3:18). Lightfoot concludes that in Philippians,

> The Morphe is contrasted with the schema as that which is intrinsic and essential with that which is accidental and outward . . . The three clauses imply respectively the true divine nature of our Lord (morphe theou). The true human nature (morphe doulou), and the externals of the human nature (schemati hos anthropos).[26]

Paul would seem to mean, then, by morphe theou not mere appearance but a form of existence which in some sense exhibits Christ's true nature.[27]

The precise character of that nature would appear to be related to what seems to be a parallel expression, "equality with God" (isa theo). It was this that He did not count a thing to be grasped, but, contrariwise, emptied

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[25] SPEP, p. 125-131.

[26] Ibid., p. 131.

[27] F. W. Beare, Epistle to the Philippians, Moffatt's New Testament Commentary (London: Adam & Charles Block, 1959), p. 79.

Himself, "having taken the form of a servant," "being born in the likeness of men," "being found in human form." The word isa the neuter form of isos is the word here translated "equal." The basic distinction of the two forms is simply that the masculine form isos would refer in this context to equality of person while the neuter would refer to attributes.[28] A key expression in understanding precisely how this is to be related to the form of God is in the meaning of the word translated "grasped" i.e. being in the form of God, was there some sense in which the preincarnate Christ could have attained a still higher dignity, i.e. equality with God"? Or are we to understand that being in the "form of God" and "equality with God" are identical expressions and that being in this state Christ's mind was such that He was willing to empty Himself--whatever the significance of this may be--and "be born in the likeness of men," "take the form of a servant," and become as such "obedient unto death, even death on a cross"?

As I have said, some of the difficulty in understanding this passage is the exact meaning of the words, "to be grasped." The noun harpagmos is translated in the active sense in the A. V. as "robbery" - "thought it not robbery to be equal with God," whereas the ASV and the RSV translate it in the passive sense - "a thing to be grasped." Several observations need to be made regarding the word as it is used here. First, it is found in a form which would ordinarily tend to render it actively ("*harpagmos*" as against the passive "*harpagma*"). As Vincent points out, however, there are exceptions to the idea that the ending "mos" as opposed to "mas" calls for the active sense.[29]

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[28] SPEP, p. 110.

Used with the verb--*hegeomai*--"to think," "consider," "regard," *harpagma* is often used in the sense of "to clutch greedily," "prize highly," "to set store by," the idea of plunder or robbing having passed out of sight.[30]

Hendricksen rightly emphasizes the fact that any active sense of the word seems to fly in the face of the context in which a highly spiritual exhortation of humility of mind is being placed before the Philippian church. The conjunction "but" (v. 7) suggests a direct contrast and this demand would only best be satisfied when succeeded by something like, "a thing to be grasped."[31] Lightfoot renders the passage, "Though He pre-existed in the form of God, yet He did not look upon equality with God as a prize which must not slip from His grasp, but He emptied Himself."[32]

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[29] Vincent lists several examples and states "there is only one example of *harpagmos* in any classical author, Plutarch's *Moralia*, p. 12A, where the meaning is apparently active. ICC, p. 58; Wm. Hendricksen, *NT Commentary Philippians* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1962), p. 129, lists at least 7 examples from the NT in which this active form is to be taken in a passive sense: Lk. 9:12; 10:2; Jno. 19:24; I Pet. 2:21; Lk. 14:23; Rom. 11:4; I Cor. 14:26.

[30] SPEP, p. 109.

[31] Hendricksen, NTCP, p. 129.

[32] SPEP, p. 109.

It would appear then that Paul is saying here not only that Christ was pre-existent but that He "existed from eternity in a state of equality with God," as Vincent translates it.[33]

Several passages which appear to confirm this view of Paul's Christology are Colossians 1:19 and 2:9. Verse 1:19 states, "For in Him the whole fulness of deity dwells bodily (hoti en auto katoikei pan to pleroma tes theotetos somatikos).

As the two passages are brought together, it becomes obvious why the translators of the RSV add "of God" in the 1:19 passage. It is certainly Paul's meaning. The significant phrases and words for analysis are: "The fulness of deity," "dwells," and "bodily."

Lightfoot in an extensive study of seventeen pages concludes the meaning of this word "pleroma" as it is used here to be "the totality of the divine powers and attributes."[34] The word translated "deity" (tes theotetes), is found only here in the N.T. and is translated by Lightfoot, Abbott (ICC), and Beare (IB) as Godhead, i.e. divine nature, to distinguish it from another word, also used only once in the New Testament, (Rom. 1:20), theiotes which connotes not "essence" but "the quality of divinity."[35]

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[33] ICC, p. 57.

[34] SPEP, p. 179.

[35] Abbott, ICC, p. 248.

The word "dwells" (katoikei) is strong in its connotation. It is in the present tense connoting continuous action and is to be contrasted with the word paroikia because of its implied connotation of "permanency" or "settled residency."

Still further, the word "bodily" (somatikos) seems to carry significance. Lightfoot remarks in this regard, "He does not say en somati - for the Godhead cannot be confined to any limits of space; nor somatoeidos, for this might suggest the unreality of Christ's human body, but somatikos; in bodily wise," "with a bodily manifestation."[36]

If Paul is saying in the Philippians passage that Christ "existed from eternity in a state of equality with God,"[37] then the incarnation for him could never mean a change in the essence of His Person, i.e. He could never become, "not-God." As a consequence the earthly ministry of Jesus is so described by Paul as, "For in Him the whole fulness of deity dwells bodily."

It is Lightfoot's opinion that in the 1:19 passage the dwelling of the pleroma refers to the Eternal Word, and not to the Incarnate Christ, and that in the 2:9 passage somatikos is added to show that the Word, in whom the pleroma thus had its abode from all eternity, crowned His work by the incarnation. He parallels these passages with the statements of the Gospel of John 1:1.

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[36] SPEP, p. 180.

[37] Vincent, ICC, p. 57.

Ho logos en pros ton theon kai theos en ho logos (The Word was with God and God was the Word," very literally) and John 1:14, ho logos sarxegeneto (The Word became flesh).[38]

All of this is to say that Paul's theology seems to present a Father-above-all, and a Son who is not created, but also exists eternally in a state of equality with God, and is the One to whom creation is attributed.

C. Paul's Anthropology

There are no clear statements in any of Paul's writings which reveal his position regarding man's origin. Romans 5:12-19 and I Corinthians 15:21-22, 45-50 contain allusions; however, from which implications can be drawn:

> Therefore as sin came into the world through one man and death through sin, so death spread to all men because all men sinned. . . . If, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ. Then as one man's trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one man's act of righteousness leads to acquittal and life for all men. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by one man's obedience many will be made righteous (Romans 5:12, 17-19).
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> For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. . . . Thus it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. But it is not the spiritual which is first but the physical, and then the spiritual. The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. As was the man of dust, so are those who are of the dust; and as is the man of heaven, so are those

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[38] Lightfoot, SPEP, p. 180.

> who are of heaven. Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven (I Cor. 15:21-22, 45-49).

These verses certainly seem to infer an organic unity of the race with Adam and an acceptance of the Genesis account as an account of the origin of man. In I Corinthians 15:45, "Adam became a living being (psuchen zosan). In verse 47, "The first man was from the earth a man of dust" (ekges choikos). Thus the first man was composed of a material and immaterial aspect. Verse 49 indicates that all men bear that image. Both statements seem to rest on Genesis 2:7, and are in contrast with bearing "the image of the man of heaven" which is associated with an eschatological event - "We shall be changed," (allagesometha) by which is meant that the perishable nature (to phtharton) must put on imperishable (aphtharsian) and the mortal (thneton) must put on immortality (athanasian).

This would all appear to infer that Paul held to a very literal interpretation of the Genesis account, and that he saw a mankind then as originating in man and woman who were created by God. A description of the manner of creation is totally absent in his epistles.

The implication of these passages is also significant for Paul's views on the nature of man.

The unity of man is implied in the previous accounts of creation of man, and this would be confined by that which is attributed to Paul in Acts 17:25, 26, "since he himself gives to all men life and breath and everything. And he made from one every nation of men (ex henos pan ethnos anthropon) to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of this habitation."

Further, Paul refers to the individual man as possessive of an inner (eso) and an outer (exo) aspect. Though he seems to imply the individual is a unity by applying the term man to each of these aspects i.e. though he possesses facets, he is an organic unity in which the facets effect the entire person blending in the action of the organic unity (II Cor. 4:16 and Rom. 7:22).

Several terms are involved in reference to the inner and outer man. Regarding the outer man - obviously a reference to the physical part of man, Paul calls man's present body a "physical body" (RSV: Grk - soma psuchikon I Cor. 15:55). It is perishable (phthartos, v. 53) and mortal (thnetos, v. 53). He also uses the terms "body" (soma) and "flesh" (sarx) in reference to it.

The term "body" for Paul is not in itself evil. The possibilities for evil are always present, however. The body is the house in which man lives (II Cor. 5:6). Man in a given place is present in his body. It is of the very essence of man for Paul. He does not conceive of man as complete apart from a body, for though death sees his natural body "sown" in the ground (speiretai soma psuchikon, v. 44), the resurrection will see it raised a spiritual body (*egeiretai soma pneumatikon*, v. 44). In contrast to the former, it is "imperishable" (*aphtharisian*) and "immortal" (*athanasian*). Not to be clothed with either is to be found "naked" (*gymnos*), II Corinthians 5:3ff, an apparent allusion to the intermediary state between death and the resurrection. The body is a complex organism, material and biological, the seat of natural drives, and although its members are potential instruments of sin (Rom. 6:12; 19; 7:5, 24), it is not itself the source of sin, or we are not, in Paul's view, sinful because we are in physical bodies.

"*Sarx*" is closely related to "body." It seems to connote man's material corporeality.[39] It is the material that covers the bones of a human or animal body, or, "The body itself viewed as substance," in one manner of Paul's usage.[40] In II Corinthians 12:7 e.g. he speaks of some apparent handicap as a "thorn given me in the flesh" (*sarki*). However, in another manner, it is related to sin. Paul says in Romans 7:18, "I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh" (*sarki*). And again verse 23, "I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin which dwells in my members" (*melesin*); and further in verse 25, "So then,

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[39] Ralph E. Knudsen, *Theology in the New Testament* (Valley Forge: The Judson Press, 1964), p. 224. Cf. Also Arndt and Gingrich, AGEL.

[40] Knudsen, TNT; Arndt & Gingrich, GELNT.

I of myself serve the law of God with my mind (noi), but with the flesh (sarki) I serve the law of sin."

It should be pointed out that Paul seems to distinguish between sin and the flesh (Rom. 7:23). Sin is a law dwelling in his members. In Romans 6:13, the members may or may not be yielded to the sin. Indeed Paul is urging that one of the provisions of the cross of Christ is that the members no longer need to yield to sin and obey the passions of the mortal body. "Sin dwells in the flesh; it uses the flesh to arouse passions and stimulate wrong actions, and through the flesh it finds a medium for manifestation,"[41] but Paul doesn't identify flesh with sin. Man as originally created--with all of the implications of the Genesis account--existed as flesh without any connection with sin. If Paul follows the Genesis account--as it appears he did--then sin came from without and not within man, and seems not in the least to be related to the fact of his possessing a body of flesh.

To turn to the aspect of man which Paul refers to as the inner man is to be confronted with still other terms.

In Romans 9:1, Paul speaks of a conscience, "I am speaking the truth in Christ, I am not lying; my conscience bears me witness in the Holy Spirit." The word suneidesis seems to basically connote the idea of "knowledge shared with another,"[42] or in this reference then a reflective consciousness which man has along side of his original consciousness.[43]

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[41] Knudsen, TNT, p. 225.

[42] Liddell & Scott, AGEL.

Several other terms which seem to bear an extremely similar connotation are mind (nous), and heart (kardia). "Mind," holds the idea of intellect and reason, but in the NT usage, in such references as I Corinthians 1:10, it seems also to include a sense of will or intent and judgment. "Heart" in many places is essentially synonymous with "mind" but in other references obviously goes beyond that to mean that reasoning, willing center of man from which all his life finds its basis of decision.[44] It obeys (Rom. 6:17), speaks (Rom. 10:6), believes (Rom. 10:10) and is indwelt by the Spirit of God (II Cor. 4:6). Paul sees both mind and heart as affected by sin (Eph. 4:17-18) so that man naturally seems unable in himself to make the proper moral judgments to live consistently in a manner to please God.

Several other terms Paul uses with respect to the "inner" man are "soul" (psuche) and "spirit" (pneuma). The word "soul" is only used about 13 times by Paul and appears to connote much the same idea as in the Old Testament account of creation, judging from I Corinthians 15:45, "The first man Adam became a living being" (psuchen), i.e. a conscious being.

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[43] Knudsen, TNT, p. 230.

[44] Ibid., p. 230.

A differentiation in the term "spirit" and "soul" is hard to clearly show when a comparison of the usage of these two terms is made in the New Testament, and Paul proves no exception to the rule. There is a distinction of his use of it in reference to the spirit existing in man, and to the Spirit of God dwelling in man, however (Rom. 8:11).

Paul, then, describes man as essentially composed of a material, visible aspect, and a spiritual aspect. He is a living unity expressing his spiritual values through the body. Both his inner and outer man have been affected by sin. There appears to be no idea in Paul of man possessing some "spark of divinity." He is rather by nature a child of wrath (*tekna phusei orges*, Eph. 2:3), dead in trespasses and sins (*humas ontas nekrous tois paraptomasin kai tais hamartiais humon*) who needs to be given spiritual life by a gracious act of God which then enables him to live pleasing to God (Eph. 2:1, 4-10; Col. 3:1-5 ff.).

The reason for his natural state and relation to God is his relation to Adam - through whom sin came into the world, (Rom. 5:12) and through whom all men accounted sinners and subject to death (Rom. 5:12-17; I Cor. 15:21, 48), and because men are naturally inclined to live as fulfilling the desires of the body (*sarx*) and the mind (*dianoia*).

D. Pauline Soteriology

As one would expect, the soteriology of Paul is closely linked to his anthropology. What man is, and has need of because of his natural state determines what is necessary to deliver him from his dilemma. For Paul, man is, through his relation to Adam, spiritually dead, alienated and in need of reconciliation to God (Eph. 2:1-3; II Cor. 5: 14-21). Man, through his natural relation to Adam, became unrighteous (Rom. 5:12-19), and expresses his spiritual state, the consequence of this biological connection, through his continued practice of breaking God's law (Rom. 3:9-18). Indeed, it is impossible for him, as he is naturally constituted, to keep God's law (Rom. 8:7). In his state of spiritual death and unrighteousness, he needs to be made alive spiritually, and to be made righteous before God. Perhaps these are the more outstanding emphases of Paul's soteriology.

The remedy for man, as presented by Paul, can be ascertained through the study of several passages in Romans and Colossians which present the basic elements unique to Paul's concept of soteriology.

In Romans 3:20-26, there is a concise but pregnant passage presenting many aspects of Paul's view:

> But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from law, although the law and the prophets bear witness to it, the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction; since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, they are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, who, God put forward as an expiation by his blood, to

> be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he passed over former sins; it was to prove at the present time that he himself is righteous and that he justifies him who has faith in Jesus.

The context of the passage presents Paul's view that all men, Jew or Gentile, are lacking in righteousness (3:9), i.e. having sinned they lack moral perfection or perfect righteousness which alone is acceptable to a holy God who must have obedience to His moral law.

Further, having broken the law, there is no way in which man can by law-keeping ever correct or change his standing of unrighteousness. His every effort to keep the law only confronts him with a standard he consistently breaks (3:20 ff.), "For no human being will be justified in his sight by works of the law, since through the law comes knowledge of sin"; and 8:7, "For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, indeed it cannot"; 3:21 also confirms this, it is a righteousness "apart from law" (choris nomou dikaiosune). The forward position of this phrase in the Greek grammatical construction of the sentence makes it very emphatic.

If man is unrighteous, and cannot by his own effort attain righteousness, then what is the means of deliverance from this dilemma? Paul sees him as being accounted righteous through the acceptance of the activity of Jesus Christ on his behalf. Man is justified (dikaioumenoi) - "be acquitted, be pronounced and treated as righteous,"[45] by His grace (te autou chariti) as a gift (dorean). The basis of justification then for Paul is in no way self-merit.

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[45] Arndt and Gingrich, GELNT.

However, in the teaching of Paul, God can only righteously declare the unrighteous to be righteous "through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus" (dia tes apolutroseas tes en Christou Iesou). The thrust of the passage of course lies in the word, "redemption" (apolutroseos). According to Arndt and Gingrich, the word originally connotes the buying back of a slave or captive, and making him free by payment of a ransom. It comes then to mean "release," "redeemed."[46] The sense for Paul seems to be a redemption from the penalty of sin. Man is condemned as a consequence of his sin (Rom. 6:23, "For the wages of sin is death"; 5:12, "Therefore as sin came into the world through one man and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all men sinned.") By "death," Paul seems to mean much more than physical death. He would go beyond this to man's spiritual state after physical death. In II Thessalonians 1:9, speaking of those who have not obeyed the Gospel, Paul states, "They shall suffer the punishment of eternal destruction and exclusion from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might." In contrast to this, for the believer, or the one who is "in Christ," "to be away from the body" is to be "at home with the Lord" (II Cor. 5:7; Phil. 1:23).

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[46] Ibid.

The manner by which Christ redeems man is also shown in this passage, as Paul continues, "whom God put forward as an expiation (hilasterion) by his blood."[47] The key word here, of course, is "expiation." It is defined by Arndt and Gingrich as, "That which expiates or propitiates; a means of expiation, gift to procure expiation."[48] The phrase "by His blood" certainly seems to associate the expiation with the death of Christ and seems to be saying that it is the way of God showing His righteousness for the forgiveness of sins. It is in this sense that Christ represents the race before God, bearing the divine judgment vicariously.[49]

A parallel passage in Colossians also lends itself to this idea of redemption, as there Paul writes:

> He has delivered us from the dominion of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins . . . And you, who were once estranged and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless, and irreproachable before him." (Col. 1:13-14, 21-22)

The passage adds to the Romans passage the idea of forgiveness (aphesis) and reconciliation (apokatallasso) as facets of salvation, and confirms the need of man to be delivered. It repeats the idea that this is accomplished through Christ's activity on the cross.

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[47] Very literally: dia pisteos en to autou haimati - through faith in His blood.

[48] GELNT.

[49] Gerhard Kittel, Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Transl. Geoffrey Bromily (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Co., 1965), III:318-323.

The idea of man's state is here reaffirmed. He is in "the dominion of darkness." For Paul this obviously connotes a spiritual state of alienation from God (II Cor. 4:4; Eph. 2:1-3) in contrast to the "kingdom of his beloved Son."

It likewise reaffirms the inability of man to change his status through self-effort. He needs instead to be delivered from this dominion, and to be transferred to the kingdom of Christ. Man is acted upon by God and brought from one state to another.

It reaffirms his need for forgiveness of sins, the cause of his alienation, and it reaffirms that this is accomplished through a redemption which is the consequence of a reconciling work of Christ's cross.

The Romans passage also deals with the means whereby one is the beneficiary of this redeeming work of Christ. It is on the one hand totally apart from law (v. 21). It is on the other hand only "through (dia pisteos) faith in Christ Jesus for all who believe (eis pantas tous pisteountas, v. 22); it is an "expiation . . . to be received by faith" (v. 25). Paul is here countering the soteriology of orthodox, first century Judaism. For them circumcision brought one into the benefits of the Abrahamic covenant, and the individual was then obliged to live according to the law. Hence, through acts of obedience to the law, one achieved righteousness. Paul's argument against this concept of righteousness was that: 1) man is naturally inclined to disobey the law (Rom:8:7); 2) that any effort to measure one's achievement by the law will only reveal the imperfection of the incomplete obedience (Rom. 3:20; 7:7-24) and; 3) that only when one is "in Christ," and as a consequence has the Spirit of God dwelling in him (Rom. 8:9-11), and is able consequently to live according to the Spirit, is he really able to fulfill the just requirement of the law (Rom. 8:4). Finally, inasmuch as those "in Christ" never fully walk in the Spirit, the forgiving grace of God gives them a righteous standing in Christ Jesus (I Cor. 1:30; II Cor. 5:21).

The key in Paul's soteriology then is for one to be "in Christ," and this for him comes "by faith." This seems to mean the acceptance of the claims of Christ's Person, the purpose of His death, and the reality of His resurrection from the dead. It is further, however, a complete reliance on this alone as having been done in the stead of the believer, or as a substitute for the believer, as the only plea for acceptance with God. This is in contrast to one pleading for God's approval and acceptance in lieu of one's own perfect obedience to God's law. (Eph. 2:8-10; Rom. 3:27-30; 4:5, 23-24, etc.)

It seems quite clear from Romans 6 that this acceptance of Christ as one's Saviour, and the outward expression of one's reliance in him takes place through baptism. Paul seems to be saying in 6:3-4 that the death of Christ is accounted to the believer when the individual is baptized into Christ Jesus, or, that baptism publicly identifies one with Christ's death and resurrection.

Election also plays a prominent part in Paul's soteriology. Those who believe are those "who are called according to his purpose . . . those whom he foreknew," and "predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son" (Rom. 8:28-30). This emphasis is also seen in the Ephesian letter, "Even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world . . . He destined us in love to be his sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will." (1:4, 5).

Seeing man as "dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2:1), and "estranged and hostile in mind," evidenced by "doing evil deeds" (Col. 1:21), God chooses some to be saved, and gives them faith to believe the Gospel of Christ.[50]

E. Pauline Morality

The characterization of Paul's teaching regarding morality is not difficult to ascertain in spite of such statements of his as "being discharged from the law" (Rom. 7:6); "stand fast therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery" (Gal. 5:1); and, "the commandment proved to be death to me" (Rom. 7:10).

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[50] Eph. 2:8, "And this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God."

Although Paul says, "To those outside the law, I became as one outside the law," he, however, went on to say, "not being without law toward God but under law to Christ" (I Cor. 9:20-21); and, "Do we then overthrow the law by this faith? By no means! On the contrary, we uphold the law" (Rom. 3:31).

It would appear that there were those who tried to make Paul's doctrine of soteriology imply an antinomian practice (Rom. 3:8; 6:1). But although Paul seems to insist that man's acts of righteousness in no way can serve as a basis for salvation (Rom. 3:20), he appears to strongly insist that the moral and ethical practice of one claiming to be "in Christ" must be in harmony with the standards called for by the commandments. To be led by the Spirit, he plainly states in Romans 8:4, will only result in fulfilling the just requirement of the law.

In Romans 6, Paul states that the one who has been baptized into Christ has not only been baptized into Christ's death, but has also been united with Him in His resurrection (v. 5), that, "our old self was crucified with him so that the sinful body might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin" (v. 6). Having died to sin once for all, Christ now lives to God (v. 10), and Paul says, "So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus" (v. 11). Paul insists that the practical expression of Christian life take the form of not allowing sin to "reign in your mortal bodies to make you obey their passions" (v. 12), and places the responsibility on the Christian to "not yield your members to sin as instruments of wickedness, but yield yourselves to God as men who have been brought from death to life" (v. 13).

This all implies that the one who is "in Christ" is one in whom the "Spirit of God dwells" (Rom. 8:9), as a consequence of God's activity in one's salvation experience, and that it is then the Christian's responsibility to "by the Spirit put to death the deeds of the body" (8:13). Indeed it is only those who are "led by the Spirit" (8:14), and so "fulfill the just requirement of the law" (8:4), who are really the sons of God (8:14).

Paul warns in Galatians 5:19-21, that those who practice (prassontes) immorality, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, anger, selfishness, dissensions, party spirit, envy, drunkenness, carousing, and the like . . . shall not inherit the kingdom of God."

Plainly, he calls for an extremely high level of moral and ethical conduct, which he insists is possible "in this present evil age" (Gal. 1:4), and "in our mortal bodies" (Rom. 6:12).

F. Pauline Eschatology

The final category of the eschatology of Paul is by no means the least important. Attention will be given to the epistles about which there is less controversy regarding authorship. There is a generally accepted pattern of chronological order in which the Thessalonian epistles are regarded as the earliest, though some would regard Galatians as earlier. These will be considered first, I and II Corinthians, and Romans will follow in the examination, and finally the prison epistles - Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians and Philemon will be surveyed.

A study of Galatians apparently finds no mention of eschatological materials at all, even indirectly.[51] One reason for this may very well be the nature of the problem which brought about the writing of the letter. Even a superficial reading of Galatians impresses the reader with the subject and character of the problem. Paul is deeply disturbed by the Galatians' failure to comprehend not what is the consummation of the Gospel, but that which is the very foundation of it. The theme is justification by faith alone as opposed to the Judaistic demand for circumcision and law-keeping as a means of salvation. The magnitude of the problem and the personal attack on Paul is such that he confines himself to this one subject and its implications for moral life which relate so closely to it.

The Thessalonian epistles, however, are significantly different than Galatians. It has often been pointed out that with the exception of chapter three of the second epistle, there is a reference to the coming of Christ in every chapter of both epistles.

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[51] A possible exception to this statement, may be 5:21b: "Those who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."

In I Corinthians 1:10, Paul speaks of Christ's coming as the new goal in the life of the Thessalonian Christians. Having turned from the worship of idols, they now serve the living God and wait for His Son from heaven.

In I Corinthians 2:20, he speaks of the Christians at Thessalonica as his "glory and joy" at Christ's coming. As those whom he has won to Christ and established into a church, they will show something of his love and service to Jesus Christ.

I Corinthians 3:11-13, again mentions the Lord's coming, in which Paul expresses his desire that the Christians of Thessalonica be unblameable at the coming of Christ. Probably a reference, as we shall later note, to the suddenness of Christ's coming, and the consequent need of always being in such a state of moral conduct as to win His approval.

I Corinthians 4:13-18 speaks of the comforting effect that the Lord's coming should have for the church. At Christ's coming, the dead believers shall be resurrected, and they and those who are living are taken together to the Lord at His coming, and are thereafter forever together with each other and the Lord, a significant contrast to the ordinary Greek view of after-life. It is also important to note in this passage that Paul says, "then we who are alive, who are left," seeming to indicate his personal expectation of being alive at the parousia.

Again, I Corinthians 5:1-11 dwells on the facet of the suddenness of Christ's coming as an incentive for a moral and ethical standard of conduct which will find God's approval.

The second epistle apparently arises out of some misunderstanding about the Lord coming. Chapter one reminds them that the parousia will entail a two-fold result among men. For those who have chosen to disbelieve the Gospel, there will be a vengeance which will take the form of suffering "the punishment of eternal destruction and exclusion from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His might" (II, 1:9). The believers, saved from that wrath (I, 5:9,10), will be to the contrary those in whom the "Lord Jesus will be glorified" (II, 1:10, 12).

Although this "day of the Lord" is to suddenly come (I, 5:3), there nevertheless will be certain signs indicating its imminence. There will be a time of "rebellion" in which the "man of lawlessness is revealed," and this will lead to a final contest with evil, consummating in the man of lawlessness' destruction by Jesus Christ (II, 2:1-11). Paul suggests in this same passage, that lawlessness is already at work, though being restrained in some way. This entire point would certainly seem to indicate the necessity for some things to take place before the coming of the Lord, even though Paul describes it in imminent tones.

Turning to the second group of epistles, the first reference is in I Corinthians 1:7. Here Paul speaks of the "revealing" of the Lord (ten apokalupsin), an interesting term for the coming. Its setting is much like that of I Thessalonians 1, presenting it as a goal for those who have been converted from paganism.

In I Corinthians 3:13, there is a reference to "the Day" as a time of judgment of the believers' life and work, and this same tone and facet of the coming is also seen in I Corinthians 5:5.

After discussing the problems relating to marriage, Paul in I Corinthians 7:29 recommends a minimum of involvement in any pursuit of life which would take one's mind and interest away from a life lived as a service to Christ, because the "appointed time has grown very short." Again, the impression that Paul views the coming as imminent naturally shows through the passage.

I Corinthians 10:11 contains an expression which connotes a similar conclusion when Paul, referring to the fact that the Old Testament was written for the instruction of his own age, speaks of his generation as those "upon whom the end of the ages (ta tela ton aionon) has come."

Chapter fifteen of the first epistle is, of course, a very significant one dealing with the resurrection. According to Paul, this will be in conjunction with the coming of Christ (v. 23). Another facet of Christ's coming mentioned in this chapter which parallels II Thessalonians 2, is that every rule and authority and power (pasan arche kai pasan exousin kai dunamin) in opposition to the rule of Christ shall be put down, and the end (telos) shall come with all things being put in subjection to God.

Finally, I Corinthians 16:22 contains the Aramaic expression "Maranatha" - our Lord comes! As Barclay observes, it is unlikely that the Greeks of Corinth would know the Aramaic language, and the presence of this expression likely indicates the use of this expression as a motto which every Christian knew and understood.[52]

The second epistle contains a passage in chapter five which develops the subject of the believer's presence with the Lord at death, ultimately giving an account of his activity as a Christian at a judgment before Christ.

Turning to Romans, the same theme regarding "last things" is quickly encountered in chapter two. Paul speaks of a judgment in that chapter as "the day of wrath" in which God will render to "every man according to his works" (vv. 5, 6), and later in verse 16 as a time when "according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus."

In Romans 5:9, as in I Thessalonians 5:23, Paul sees the believer as saved from "the wrath of God" in that day.

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[52] Wm. Barclay, The Mind of St. Paul (New York: Harper and Rowe, 1958), p. 222. [Hereafter referred to as TMSP].

The eighth chapter of Romans associates with this activity of God in the consummation an effect not only upon man, but upon nature as well, "The creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the glorious liberty of the children of God" (8:21).

In Romans 13:11ff, Paul again alludes to the apparent nearness of this Day of the Lord. "Besides this you know what hour it is, how it is full time now for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now then when we first believed; the night is far gone, the day is at hand (*eggiken*)."

In the last group, the prison epistles, a reference to Christ's coming is found in Colossians 3:4, "When Christ who is our life appears, then you will also appear with him in glory." It certainly sounds much the same note as I Thessalonians 4:16-17.

In the same third chapter slaves are urged to conduct and service acceptable to the Lord knowing that they will receive the inheritance as their reward (3:22-25).

Although Ephesians is sometimes given as an example of Pauline writing which is void of eschatology, the reference in 1:13-15 of the Holy Spirit as the guarantee of our "inheritance until we acquire possession of it," and again in 4:30, "The Holy Spirit . . . in whom you were sealed for the day of redemption," would seem to contradict that view.

An even stronger emphasis is found in Philippians which interestingly enough presents Paul's thought as he awaits trial with the possible outcome of death. In view of that possibility, Paul still speaks, "But our commonwealth is in heaven, and from it we await a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will change our lowly body to be like his glorious body" (3:20-21).

Again in 4:5 of Philippians Paul witnesses his expectation of the nearness of the coming of the Lord when he says, "The Lord is at hand (eggus)."

It seems quite clear, then, that each period of Paul's ministry of writing contains eschatological references, and that he does not give up the concept of the coming of the Lord. Over the years from approximately 45 to 64 A.D., Paul writes to churches throughout Asia, Greece, and Italy. He writes because of a wide range of problems and regarding a wide range of subjects; but in nearly every letter, and without exception in every chronological group, there is mention in some way to some facet of the coming of Christ.

Not only so, but it seems to have just as significant a place in the later writings as in the earlier ones. Its prominence in the early Thessalonian epistles in contrast to later letters may simply be the particular problems which occasioned his writing. This observation is especially valid if the Galatian letter, in which there is no apparent eschatological reference, is the earliest.

What kind of summary of Paul's views regarding eschatology can we draw from this survey? First, it is apparent that Paul saw this age as culminating in a _telos_ which begins with the coming of Jesus Christ, his _parousia_, or _apocalypsis_.

Before such would transpire, however, Paul believed a time of unprecedented lawlessness would come as a result of the removal of a restraining influence which is presently preventing such turmoil. It will be led by the "son of perdition" who will claim that he is God, and will possess Satanic power to work pretentious signs (II Thess. 2:1-11).

The coming of Christ "as a thief," "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye" (I Thess. 5:1-4; I Cor. 15:52), will result in at least three basic consequences. There will be for believers who have died, a bodily resurrection (I Thess. 4:16; I Cor. 15:52); and for those living at His coming, a translation; and apparently also a transformation as significant as those resurrected from the dead, whereby all bodies will become like Christ's glorious body (I Thess. 4:16; I Cor. 15:51; Phil. 3:20-21). All believers will then face a judgment which will encompass all their lives as Christians. Although they face reprimand for failures, they will not come under the "wrath of God" as the unbelievers (I Cor. 3:10-15; I Thess. 5:9).

With regard to the unbeliever, the lot is of course entirely the opposite. The coming of Christ brings them to a punishment of eternal destruction and exclusion from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His might (II Thess. 1:9). This seems to be as far as Paul goes in describing their lot.

A third sphere affected by the coming of Christ is nature itself. Paul speaks of creation as being "set free from its bondage of decay," and obtaining "the glorious liberty of the children of God" (Rom. 8:20). It is difficult to be explicit as to all that he means by this for this brief comment is the limit of his reference to the subject. Barclay believes Paul's doctrine of last things has been heavily influenced by Isaiah 26 and 27, and shows what he believes are parallels in I and II Thessalonians to the coming of God, His judgment, the resurrection of the dead, the trumpet sound, and the gathering of the elect of God.[53] If this is true, it may very well be that the millennial pictures of Isaiah 40-66 are also in Paul's mind when he speaks as he does in Romans eight regarding the changes which he believes are to be associated with the coming of Christ. It is significant that of the 97 quotations from the Old Testament in Paul's writings, 25 of them are from Isaiah, and of the 110 possible allusions to the Old Testament, 40 of them are possibly references to Isaiah.[54]

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[53] TMSP, p. 223.

[54] Based on my tabulation from data in E. Earle Ellis, Paul's Use of the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1957), pp. 150-154.

Finally, it is significant that Paul seems always to regard the parousia as imminent. This is certainly true in his early writings. In I Thessalonians 4:16, 17, when he speaks of the coming, it is "then we who are alive, who are left, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air." The same expectation is seen in the second group of letters. In I Corinthians 15:52, he says, "we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed," and in Romans 13:11, "the day is at hand." Both seem to clearly express the imminence of the coming. The same is testified to in Philippians 3:20-21, one of the last group of his writings. Here he says while awaiting death, "our commonwealth is in heaven, and from it we await a Saviour . . . who will change our lowly body to be like his glorious body."

What lies beyond the coming with its ensuing judgment seems to find no place in Paul's doctrine other than the brief comment in I Corinthians 15:24, "Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet."

CHAPTER III

A COMPARISON OF PAULINE AND EARLY GNOSTIC VIEWS

In chapter one, I surveyed various gnostic groups that dated from the middle of the second century back through the first, and into the pre-Christian era. I am reluctant to forge each of these groups into a chain and claim a clearly delineated historical movement. However, I do not hesitate to point to the presence of groups in the New Testament period that held many views in common with those who were later clearly labeled as gnostics. It seems inevitable that Paul and the Church encountered these then. In chapter two, I surveyed Paul's beliefs.

It is essential to keep in mind the reason for this survey. It has been to show the existence of gnostic doctrines during the time of Paul, and to state what those views likely were in order to compare and contrast the gnostic views with those of Paul.

It appears that there were those living during Paul's time who held views in common with gnostics of the second century, and who at the same time held some views in common with Paul's doctrine. In this chapter, I will first consider the similarities, comparing the positions of Paul and the gnostics in each category. Then I will present a representative view showing why some scholars concluded that Paul should properly be classified as a proto-gnostic. In the final chapter, I will then consider the dissimilarities and reasons why I believe he should not be so classified.

A. The Categories Compared

1. Cosmogonies and Cosmologies

One of the fundamental concepts of gnostic thought revealed through the survey of cosmogonies, was the presence of a hierarchy of some sort of spiritual beings understood as being a part of the original order of existence. The pattern varied, but either by clear statement or by implication a hierarchy was included in each group's beliefs.

It is evident that Paul's teaching also included a hierarchy of spiritual beings that are placed under the God and Father of All.[1] There is also a hierarchy of evil spiritual beings under the "god of this world," Satan (II Cor. 4:4). Ephesians 6:12 speaks of "contending . . . against the principalities (*tas archas*), against the powers (*tas exousias*), against the world rulers (*tous kosmokratoras*) of this present darkness, against the spiritual hosts (*ta pneumatika*) of wickedness in the heavenly places (*en tois epouranois*). Again in Romans 8:38 he refers to "angels" (*aggeloi*) and "principalities (*archai*) as being unable to separate the believer from the love of God. Further, Grant points out that in Galatians Paul tells his converts not to serve gods who are not really gods, but which are in reality only "weak and impoverished stoicheia." Grant states further:

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[1] *Supra*, p. 105, 106.

> Who can these stoicheia be but planetary spirits, weak and impoverished because somehow Christ has triumphed over them? And it may be--though caution is certainly necessary--that they are to be identified with the angels through whom, Paul says (Gal. 3:19), the Mosaic law was ordained. Paul's doctrine is . . . coming closer to Gnosticism.[2]

Reference is also made to Paul's statement in I Corinthians 2:8 where he speaks of the "rulers of this age" (ton archonton tou aionos) who crucified the Lord of Glory. The use of this title for Christ in this contextual connection with the words the archons of this aeon suggests to Grant a relationship with the apocalyptic book of Enoch. In that book it is the title used to refer to God. On that basis he states regarding I Corinthians 2:8, "In this Pauline passage we find ourselves a little beyond apocalyptic - in the direction of gnosis."[3] Other references seem to imply there are good spiritual beings as well. II Corinthians 11:14 states that "Satan disguises himself as an angel of light," and II Thessalonians 1:7 speaks of Christ coming "with his mighty angels."

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[2] Robert M. Grant, Gnosticism and Early Christianity (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959), p. 156.

[3] Ibid., p. 157.

Another idea often encountered in gnostic cosmogony is their view of the universe as being a series of planetary spheres. It is possible from the language of Paul in II Corinthians 12:2-4 to conclude that he held a similar view. There he speaks as follows:

> I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven - whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows. And I know that this man was caught up into Paradise--whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows--and he heard things that cannot be told, which man may not utter.

Still another area of similarity in this category is suggested by the language of Paul in Romans 8:19-23. There Paul states that creation waits for "the revealing of the sons of God" (a probable reference to Christ's coming) because creation will then be set free from its "bondage to decay and obtain the glorious liberty of the children of God." It was God who subjected creation to this state or condition. The language seems to imply that the present state of nature is imperfect.

To repeat, there are at least three ways in which the cosmogonies of the gnostics and Paul appear to reflect similarities: each seems to possess a spiritual hierarchy; Paul seems to speak of a series of heavens; and he seems to imply that the present state of nature is imperfect.

2. Theology

In this category it will be obvious to the reader that there is some degree of overlapping with cosmogony which seems to be unavoidable.

Gnostic theology consistently presents God as God-above-all. Regardless of the character of the hierarchy, there was inevitably a God who was above all else - spiritual beings, men or the world. It was he who in one way or another "created" a spiritual hierarchy of lesser gods from which emanated the universe and mankind. Usually only the immediate god or group of gods in the hierarchy was able to know this otherwise incomprehensible One.

Paul presents a concept of God above and beyond all else. In I Corinthians 8:4-6, the following statements are found: "There is no God but one . . . yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things." Ephesians 4:6 adds "one God and Father of us all, who is above all."

There are also references in Paul's writings which indicate a limitation in man's ability to know God. One example of this is in I Corinthians 2:11, "For what person knows a man's thoughts except the spirit of the man which is in him? So also no one comprehends (egnoken) the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God." Still another reference is found in Romans 11:33-34 where it states, "How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! For who has known (egno) the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor"?

3. Anthropology

Anthropology furnishes several similarities between gnostic and Pauline views. The origin of man is one such area. For both, man is the creation of some deity. Then, because that is true, he is possessed in some sense with divine qualities. The author of Acts attributes to Paul the statement, "as even some of your poets have said, 'For we are indeed his offspring.' Being then God's offspring . . ." (Acts 17:28b-29a). Also, as was pointed out above,[4] Paul seems to follow the Genesis account of Adam's creation which supports the point being made.

The two views of man's nature are also similar. Some of the gnostics thought earthly man was formed by a Demiurge who breathed into him a psychic substance. Man was then material and immaterial. There were some men, however, in whom there had also been fused a spiritual principle from one of the higher deities so that some men were then body, soul and spirit. In the Thessalonian epistle one reads the verse: "May the God of peace himself sanctify you wholly; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless" (I Thess. 15:23). For the gnostic, this character of man's nature also included a classification of mankind. The spiritual were destined to be saved through gnosis. The psychic were often associated with the rest of the professing Christians other than the gnostics who classified themselves as spiritual, i.e. the psychic were the "out group." For the psychic, good works were also necessary for salvation. Finally there were the hylic who were destined to perish. Paul also speaks of spiritual and psychic men. The most vivid reference of this sort is found in I Corinthians 2:14-15:

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[4] *Supra*, p. 133.

> The unspiritual (psuchikos anthropos)[5] man does not receive the gifts of the Spirit of God for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned (pneumatokos) judges all things.

There also seems to be a common bond between the two positions in that they both see man as naturally inclined to moral and ethical evil. For the gnostic, man created as he was, cannot be anything different than he is. Everything else being equal, Paul seems to hold the same views. He states for example in Ephesians 2:3, "Among them we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, following the desires of body and mind, and so were by nature children of wrath like the rest of mankind" (Kai emetha tekna phusei orges hos kai hoi loipoi).

Finally, it is to be noted that both hold the view that apart from the knowledge which God has given man about Himself, man is ignorant of God. Again quoting from the Ephesian letter:

> Now this I affirm and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds; they are darkened in their understanding (eskotomenoi te dianoia ontes) alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance (dia ten agnoian) that is in them (4:17-18b).

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[5] Translated in 15:44 as "physical" and having a note here with an alternate reading of "natural" man.

4. Soteriology

Both Paul and the gnostics see man by himself in a hopeless dilemma. Man is so constituted that his natural state denies him salvation, and he is ill-equipped to deliver himself out of his predicament. Both views believe it is quite essential that deliverance come from outside of man. The spiritual forces opposed to any change of man's state are many and powerful. Further, man is ignorant of the true God as well as his own personal potential to be delivered from the evil world that confronts him. With no help in himself or from his fellow man, man finds deliverance from the descent of a very high member of the spiritual hierarchy into the world, according to both Paul and the gnostics. Paul states in Galatians 4:4-5: "But when the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son . . . to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons." Or again in Romans 3:24-25: "They are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as an expiation by his blood, to be received by faith."

Further, He descended unknown to all but the elect, "None of the rulers of this age understood this; for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory." And, having accomplished his mission, he returns to the Father again (Philippians 2:9-11). The message which the Saviour brings is essentially to an elect group: "even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world" (Eph. 1:4); "as God's chosen ones" (Col. 3:12).

For the gnostic the message was hidden from the non-elect. It could be known only by the spiritual. This same kind of language seems to be present in Pauline literature. In I Corinthians 2:7 Paul writes: "But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glorification."[6] In a more extended passage on this theme he says in Ephesians 3:3-5:

> How the mystery (_mysterion_) was made known (_egnoristhe_) to me by revelation (_apokalupsin_), as I have written briefly. When you read this you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit.

Quite naturally knowing the message brings a certain knowledge of God. In Galatians 4:9, Paul describes the Galatian Christians as those who "have come to know God"; while in I Corinthians 13:12 he says, "Now I know (_ginosko_) in part."

The soteriologies then present similarities in the descent and ascent of a redeemer from the hierarchy who is recognized only by the elect; in the bringing of a message which seems to be a mystery to the non-elect; and in consequence of that message producing a knowledge of God.

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[6] _Alla laloumen theou sophian en mysterio ten apokekrummenen_.

5. Morality

As already mentioned[7] the gnostics held two positions in this category: the antinomian, and the ascetic. There were some among the antinomian gnostics who viewed the law as something to be intentionally violated. For them the law originated from the Old Testament Jehovah, creator of the material world, and it was simply another one of his attempts to enslave man. It is possible to understand Paul's attitude toward the Old Testament Law as akin to that view. Some statements of Paul which may encourage that judgment are: "To those outside the law I became as one outside the law" (I Cor. 9:21); "All things are lawful" (I Cor. 10:23); "Why should my liberty be determined by another man's scruples"? (I Cor. 10:29); "For freedom Christ has set us free; stand fast therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery" (Gal. 5:1). Perhaps even more susceptible to such understanding are his statements in Romans 7: "Likewise, my brethren, you have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may . . . bear fruit for God!" The possibility for deducing antinomian conclusions from these statements were observed even by those in the first century, for Paul had to go on in chapter seven to answer the question, "What then shall we say? That the law is sin?" That such conclusions were drawn from his teaching is also inferred from his remarks in chapter three that some were saying he taught people to do evil that good may come (Rom. 3:8).

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[7] Supra, p. 102.

6. Eschatology

The eschatologies of the gnostics present some variations among the different groups, but nevertheless they contain some basic factors. They generally set forth some type of culmination to history, frequently cataclysmic in nature. Associated with this is the separation of the elect from non-elect. The gnostics are, of course, in some fashion delivered from the imperfect world of matter and enter into the pleroma of pure spirituality. Generally, little attention is given to the ultimate destiny of the world of matter.

It is readily seen that Paul's eschatology would include a number of these same factors. For Paul, history indeed moves toward a _telos_. For example, he says in I Corinthians 15:24: "Then comes the end (_telos_) when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power." And there seems to be little question that the "coming" or "apocalypse" will be a cataclysmic event. In II Thessalonians 1:8, the following words of Paul are found:

> When the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance upon those who do not know God and upon those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They shall suffer the punishment of eternal destruction and exclusion from the presence of the Lord and the glory of his might.

Will you note, too, that the passage also alludes to the separation of the non-elect. In contrast with them is the experience of the elect who are gathered into the _pleroma_. Reference is made to this in I Thessalonians 4:16:

> For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the archangel's call, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first; then we who are alive, who are left, shall be caught up _together_ with them in the clouds to _meet the Lord_ in the air; and so shall we _always be with the Lord_.

7. Summary

In each of the categories then there are significant similarities. Words, concepts, doctrines and emphases used in gnostic literature are apparently also present in Pauline literature. There is a spiritual hierarchy, and a state of nature which is imperfect. There is a God who is above all, and man--body, soul and spirit--who is ignorant of that God, caught in the world of matter. He is helpless apart from receiving a message of mystery, brought by a member of the hierarchy who then returns to the _pleroma_. There are then those who know God and who wait a cataclysmic consummation which will separate them from the non-elect and take them into the _pleroma_.

B. Paul as Proto-gnostic, a Representative View

Common denominators such as these lead some scholars to maintain that Paul was manifesting "gnostic tendencies,"[8] that he was expressing "proto-gnostic ideas"[9] and that he was "moving in the direction of Gnosticism."[10] By such statements, these scholars do not seem to be inferring that Paul simply used similar expressions and concepts later used by the second century gnostics, but they mean that Paul was adopting views which were gnostic. Because of these factors, Professor Wilson regards Reitzenstein's estimation of Paul as "the first and greatest Gnostic"[11] as somewhat justified.

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[8] Robert M. Wilson, _The Gnostic Problem_ (London: A. R. Mowbray & Co., Limited, 1958), p. 75.

A representation of this view is found in Dr. Robert M. Grant's book, Gnosticism and Early Christianity. Dr. Grant's thesis is that Gnosticism rose through the failure of apocalyptic Judaism. He explains his view as follows: The Old Testament prophets believed God was going to act in order to correct the bad condition of their nation's domination by others. Apocalyptic writers expected that correction to take the form of the destruction of the world and the substitution of a new one for the old, even predicting the approximate time when God would act. The Qumran community represents such a tradition. Their apocalypses eventually called for a holy war to be waged against the "sons of darkness." In a sense they anticipated the zealots.

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[9] Grant, GEC, p. 36.

[10] Ibid., p. 160.

[11] TGP, p. 71.

Dr. Grant believes that in the first century apocalyptic expectation and efforts to realize the expectation were combined. In 6 A.D. after the ethnarch of Judaea had been deposed by the Romans, a certain Judas arose in Galilee to oppose the payment of taxes to Rome and to establish a theocracy. As Dr. Grant points out, the New Testament also reflects similar hopes. The disciples themselves thought that the kingdom of God was going to appear immediately (Lk. 19:11). Later, Claudius Theudas endeavored to lead a group against Roman troops. In Nero's rule a prophet came from Egypt and tried to lead a group in the seizure of Jerusalem.

About 62 A.D. long awaited signs began to be given in Jerusalem. A miraculous light illuminated the altar before the Passover. Several weeks later chariots and armed soldiers were seen in the clouds. At Pentecost the priests heard the sound of many voices saying, "We are departing hence." At the Tabernacle a rustic named Joshua pronounced apocalyptic woes against Jerusalem and the Temple. Later a group of zealots murdered the high priest and appointed their own substitute. Even at the end of the war, prophets in Jerusalem urged the people to climb to the roof of the Temple where God would give them miraculous signs of deliverance.

In spite of all this religious enthusiasm, however, Vespasian burned Qumran, and in 70 A.D., Jerusalem itself fell. Apocalyptic faith was solidly affected by this and many were probably brought to make religious readjustment.

In 117 A.D., another revolt was suppressed and Roman soldiers erected a votive altar to Serapis in Jerusalem. Finally after the rebellion of Bar Cochba was quelled (132-135 A.D.), and Hadrian rebuilt Jerusalem as Aelia Capitolina the apocalyptic writers lost their faith in a genuine historical future.

Dr. Grant believes the first century apocalypticist would then have had several options: (1) he could postpone the time of fulfillment and rewrite his apocalypse; (2) he could abandon his religion entirely; (3) he could look for escape rather than victory, and then reinterpret his sacred writings in order to show that the revelation had been misunderstood. Dr. Grant believes most gnostic teachers reinterpreted the Old Testament and the ingredients of apocalyptic writings also. The essence of their religion came to be the knowledge of the nature of the self and of the way in which the self could escape from this world to another.

Dr. Grant believes there is evidence of this reevaluation in Paul's writings and this along with the other similarities supports the classification of Paul as protognostic.[12]

> It seems to me that earlier stages of a similar process can be detected in the thought of the apostle Paul. His message to the Greco-Roman world was originally apocalyptic; in his Thessalonian letters we see him trying to correct the exaggerated idea that the day of the Lord has already come (II Thess. 2:2). Later he

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[12] GEC, pp. 27-36.

> modifies his views and the emphasis on the apocalyptic diminishes while proto-Gnostic ideas are expressed . . . For this reason the apocalyptic-eschatological expression "the kingdom of God" is infrequent in both Paul and John.[13]

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[13] Ibid., p. 36.

CHAPTER IV

A CONTRAST OF PAULINE AND EARLY GNOSTIC VIEWS

Many scholars then, classify Paul as proto-gnostic. This is inferred because of a substantial similarity between his views and the view of the gnostics, in vocabulary, concepts, doctrines and emphases. In this chapter, I would like to try to demonstrate that although such a classification is possible, it is by no means necessary to classify Paul as proto-gnostic because of these similarities.

I would like to reconsider the categories and show that as well as similarities, there are significant dissimilarities in basic doctrinal views. Also I would like to suggest that the similarity of language does not necessarily imply a common identity of connotation or purpose in its use. Finally, I would like to demonstrate that the emphasis in Paul's eschatology does not necessarily lead to the conclusion that he re-evaluated his position, and therefore, no longer emphasized the return of Christ.

A. The Categories Contrasted

1. Cosmogonies and Cosmologies

As noted in the previous chapter, Paul definitely believed in a spiritual hierarchy. There is, however, significant contrast in Paul's view with those of the gnostics.

His teaching regarding the good hierarchy contains the traditional view of the Trinity. There are no series of emanations from the Father-above-all, nor is there the creation of the Son who then creates some lesser spiritual beings who in turn bring lesser beings into existence. For Paul the Son creates and He creates all things, "all things were created through him and for him."[1] Nor is He Himself created by the Father for the purpose of creating. Christ is the Lord (I Cor. 8:5, 6);[2] the indwelling Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ are synonymous terms for Paul (Rom. 8: 9, 10); and while Philippians 2:5-8 points to His pre-existence as being in "the form of God," Paul in Colossians 1:19 and 2:9 endeavors to show that Christ's incarnation is but a change in form and not in essence.[3]

Paul's view of the state of nature is also different under close observation. The state of "decay" does not seem to be the initial state of creation, but it is the consequence of the Creator's subjugation of it to this state (Rom. 8:20). Apparently as a consequence of man's "fall" it was an aspect of the penalty inflicted upon him.[4] A dualism of spirit and matter exists, but they are not essentially, as in gnostic views, antagonistic.

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[1] _Supra_, pp. 105-107.

[2] _Supra_, pp. 122, 123.

[3] _Supra_, pp. 126, 127.

[4] _Supra_, pp. 118, 119.

2. Theology

Several of the similarities in this category were already pointed out in the category of cosmogony. Paul held to a concept of God as Father-above-all, and he seems to believe that there is a limitation in the knowledge of God.

However, there are some significant contrasts between Paul and the gnostic thought here also. According to Paul, though God is above all, He is not aloof from His creation but is very active in it. In II Corinthians 5:18 and 19, he states, "All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself . . . God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself." Indeed, God, according to Paul, seems to carry out a plan among men (Rom. 9:11; Eph. 1:11). He chooses men before the creation (Eph. 1:4), and then He works through men who preach the Gospel (II Cor. 5:20), as well as in the hearts of those who hear the preaching and are chosen to have faith in Jesus Christ (Eph. 2:8; Col. 2:12). God then continues to work in behalf of the believers, "If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, will he not also give us all things with him?" (Rom. 8:31, 32). The preservation of the believer, so that he realizes God's full purposes for him, is yet another facet of God's working among men: "for God is at work in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure" (Phil. 2:13).

According to Paul, God is apparently actively working in the lives of unbelieving men also. In Romans 9 he seems to indicate that even as God chose Jacob so he also rejected Esau (vv. 1-13). And, in verse 17, Paul writes, "For the scripture says to Pharaoh, 'I have raised you up for the very purpose of showing my power in you, so that my name may be proclaimed in all the earth.'" Again, in II Thessalonians 2:11, Paul writes regarding those who steadfastly resist the Gospel, "Therefore God sends upon them a strong delusion, to make them believe what is false, so that all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness." The God-above-all according to the gnostic view was much less concerned about the sphere of men and matter. These were the product of Jehovah, the Jewish God of the Old Testament, and for the gnostic this Jehovah was far from being the God-above-all.

Paul's concept of God on the one hand seems to reflect God as being incomprehensible, but on the other hand, he speaks of knowing God as not only being possible but as being the responsibility of man to understand, especially the believer. The God-above-all, according to Paul, has revealed himself to man. All of creation, in spite of the problem of evil, nevertheless reveals to mankind the eternal power and deity of God (aidios autou dunamis kai theiotes, Rom. 1:20) with such clarity (kathorao), that when men "knew" (gnontes) God and did not honor Him as God, God gave them over to judgment (Rom. 1:21; 2:14, 15). God's work of redemption for men; however, frees the believer from the spiritual blindness which characterizes the rest of mankind (II Cor. 4:3-5; Eph. 4:17-21), and enlightens him to the knowledge of God (Col. 1:13, 14; 1:10; 3:10).

Paul's view of the Trinity can also be contrasted with the gnostic view of God. Earlier I discussed how each group of gnostics believed that even the most intimate member of the spiritual hierarchy was in some way an emanation of the Father-above-all. As was pointed out in the study of Philippians 2:5-11, Paul held that Jesus Christ "existed from eternity in a state of equality with God," and that Christ in His humiliation was God incarnate.[5] Paul also equates the Spirit, the Spirit of God, and the Spirit of Christ (Rom. 8:9; Eph. 2:22).

3. Anthropology

As previously shown there are areas of agreement between Paul and the gnostics, but the area of anthropology is one of the categories in which there is major disagreement.

There are at least two divergent views between Paul and the gnostics regarding the origin of man. One relates to the Person of the creating deity, and the other has to do with the original character of man. They are intricately related.

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[5] *Supra*, pp. 125-127.

The gnostic seems to begin with man and reason back to his creator. It would appear that herein lies one of the reasons for his views of cosmogony and theology. The gnostic observes evil in the world through man's conduct. It seems to him to be universal in its expression, and therefore is part of the very fabric of man's nature. Man's origin is outside of himself. He is dependent on a higher being for his existence. However, it apparently seemed inconsistent to the gnostic that imperfection should have its source in the Father-above-all. The deity in the spiritual hierarchy that was responsible for his existence and material form, as well as the world of matter, therefore, was far removed from the Father-above-all. This Demiurge was consequently not as enlightened; he was more ignorant and possessed imperfect moral and ethical traits. His progeny therefore bore his imperfections. The Jehovah of the Genesis account was considered by the gnostic to be that Demiurge. The Father-above-all and the God of the Jewish Old Testament were certainly not the same for the gnostic, but they most surely were for Paul.

Further, Paul would have strongly objected to the universe being brought into existence by any one less than the God who is over all. He would also have rejected any idea of it being originally imperfect. Though Paul never speaks regarding the ultimate origin of evil, there are several passages which seem to imply the absence of evil in the original creation, and infer that Paul accepted the Genesis account of creation. Both are found in Romans. In 5:12 he says, "Therefore as sin came into the world through one man," and in 8:20 he continues, "for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of him who subjected it in hope." These are surely allusions to the "fall" of man and his ensuing judgment (Gen. 3). It should be remembered that the writer of the Genesis account described the original creation as it was surveyed by God as "very good" (Gen. 1:31). For Paul, Jehovah was creator; he was the Father-above-all. No creation from His hand possessed any original imperfection.

This leads to the second different viewpoint between Paul and the gnostics regarding the origin of man - that regarding the character of man's nature.

As has been suggested in the last few paragraphs, the gnostic believed that the character of man's nature was due to basic faults in his origin. Everything else being equal, since he possessed a body, he could be nothing more or less than he was naturally.

For Paul, creation's faults were a consequence of man's "fall" (Rom. 5:12; 8:20). There are at least two aspects of man's nature where very decided and basic differences appear between Pauline and gnostic thought. One concerns Paul's view of the body, and closely related to this is his view of sex.

The gnostic viewed the body negatively. Simon, speaking of the soul being "set free from the darkness of the body,"[6] is representative of the general regard among the gnostics for the body. On the contrary, Paul believes the body, even after the "fall," is in itself not evil. The body is the house in which man lives (II Cor. 5:6) and man is incomplete apart from it. Not to be clothed with either the natural body (soma psuchikon) in this life or the spiritual body (soma pneumatikon) after the resurrection is to be found naked (gymnos, I Cor. 15:44; II Cor. 5:3ff). The body is a complex material and biological mechanism, and although its members are potential instruments of sin (Rom. 6:12, 19; 7:5, 23), it is not of itself the cause of sin. Paul distinguishes between sin and flesh or members of the body (Rom. 7:23): "Sin dwells within me"; "evil lies close at hand" (to kakon parakeitai); "the law of sin dwells in my members" (Rom. 7:17, 21, 23). The members may or may not be yielded to the indwelling sin (Rom. 6:13), but they are not in themselves the source of sin.

This is all intimately related to Paul's view of sex. For the gnostics, propagation of material bodies was a form of co-operation with the faltering Demiurge who brought the material world into being. Gnostic objections to marriage and sex come then from the very heart of their philosophy of life. Paul's views, however, were founded on entirely different presuppositions than theirs. It is true that Paul says "to the unmarried and the widows I say that it is well for them to remain single as I do" (I Cor. 7:8); however, it is necessary to understand why Paul spoke as he did. In 7:26, speaking to the unmarried, he says, "I think in view of the impending distress (ten enestosan anagken), it is well for a person to remain as he is." In verse 29, he seems to clarify this when he says, "I mean brethren, the appointed time has grown very short (ho kairos sunestalmenos estin). This seems to correlate with his statement to the Roman Church, that many believe was written in the same period of time as the Corinthian epistles, "you know what hour it is, how it is full time now for you to wake from sleep . . . the night is far gone, the day is at hand" (Rom. 13:11, 12). If this is a proper correlation, the passage may well be a reference to Paul's apparent conviction that Christ's parousia was imminent. His counsel then in verses 28 and 32-35 would mean that marriage divides the attention of the individual. The married man or woman is necessarily concerned with pleasing the marriage partner, whereas the unmarried, freed from this concern, can give full devotion to the Lord (v. 34). Regardless of the interpretation placed upon these verses, it is clear that Paul does not regard marriage in itself as evil. He states in verse 28, "But if you marry, you do not sin." There are places in his epistles where Paul could have easily expressed disapproval of marriage. This he does not do. He rather speaks to strengthen faithfulness to the ordinance.

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[6] Supra, p. 11.

4. Soteriology

The soteriologies of Paul and the gnostics show a number of similar facets, but for all the agreement in the two positions, this category is another area where very basic differences appear between Pauline and gnostic views.

The member of the hierarchy who descends to man is one point of great difference. The exact status of Christ among the gnostic groups must be generalized here. There was a tendency to identify Him closely with the Father-above-all by most of the groups, and then to hold to some type of doceticism regarding their understanding of the incarnation. The traditional view of the Trinity is only approximated in several of the groups.[7] The incarnation is, of course, inevitably rejected on the basis of the gnostic view of matter.

Paul's position regarding the Person of Christ has been reviewed under the category of theology.[8] "He was in the form of God" (Phil. 2:6), that is, "He existed from eternity in a state of equality with God."[9] The incarnation was for Paul in no sense merely an appearance of humanity, or the divine Christ coming upon the human Jesus from the baptism to the cross. "God sent forth his Son, born (genomenon) of woman, born under the law" (Gal. 4:4); "taking the form of a servant, being born (genomenos) in the likeness of men" (Phil. 2:7); and Paul writes of this one further, "He has now reconciled in his body of flesh (somati tes sarkos) by death" (Col. 1:22). Also in Colossians he writes, "For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily (somatikos)"[10] (2:9), Paul seems to hold that whether Christ was considered preincarnate or incarnate, He was God, and that His incarnation cannot be properly understood as a mere appearance of humanity.

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[7] Supra, p. 100.

[8] Supra, pp. 124-132.

[9] Supra, p. 130.

Paul's insistence on this point in a letter to a church troubled by incipient gnosticism,[11] stems from another basic difference in the soteriologies of Paul and the gnostics. The gnostics believed that man's moral and ethical character was attributable to his material body. Deliverance then lay in escape from the body and this world of matter. Paul, however, saw man in a completely different reference. God created man and as Ruler of His moral universe, God revealed His moral will to man. To some degree He did this "on their hearts" (Rom. 2:15), so that "when Gentiles who have not the law do by nature what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law" (Rom. 2:14). He revealed it much more clearly through the written law: "you call yourself a Jew and rely on the law . . . and know his will and approve what is excellent, because you are instructed in the law" (Rom. 2:17, 18). Neither Gentile (Rom. 1:18-32), nor Jew (Rom. 2:1-3:9), however, obeys the law they received from God, and so they must stand before God's bar of judgment as unrighteous and condemned (Rom. 1:18; 3:9, 10, 19-20). Because he is unrighteous and condemned, man finds himself in need of deliverance, for he is unable to deliver himself (Rom. 3:20). It is precisely here that Paul sees the necessity of the incarnation, "But when the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law" (Gal. 4:4-5); "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us - for it is written. 'Cursed be every one who hangs on a tree" (Gal. 3:13); "And you, who were once estranged and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by death" (Col. 1:21, 22).[12] Paul sees Christ incarnate on the cross as the means of justifying man before God:

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[10] Supra, p. 131.

[11] Supra, pp. 84-89.

> But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from law, although the law and the prophets bear witness to it, the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction; since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, they are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, who God put forward as an expiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins; it was to prove at the present time that he himself is righteous and that he justifies him who has faith in Jesus (Rom. 3:21-26).

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[12] It is important to note in passing that early in his life as seen in Galatians, or later, as seen in Colossians, Paul's soteriology has not changed.

Paul also sees the cross as the basis for delivering the believing man from the law of sin (Rom. 7) in his being (Rom. 8:3, 4). For Paul the experience of believing on Christ involves receiving the indwelling Spirit of God into the believer's life (Eph. 1:13; Rom. 8:9), and through submission of one's being to Him, one is enabled to walk in the Spirit, and put to death the deeds of the body (Rom. 6: 11-13; 8:12, 13).

Thus, although Paul and the gnostics see the problem man faces somewhat the same, each draws a conclusion from a completely different source, and consequently has a completely different answer.

5. Morality

In considering the areas of similarity in the category of morality, it was noted that certain facets of Paul's teaching may have been subject to question by some of Paul's contemporaries. One would have to be quite ignorant of Paul's doctrine, however, to classify him as an antinomian in the same sense that one would classify the immoral and unethical gnostic who believed these areas were totally unrelated to his spirituality. It is well known to all students of the New Testament that Paul discusses at great length in his epistles the Gospel as it applies to moral and ethical issues. He calls for a high standard of achievement in both areas. Paul's attitude toward continued observance of dietary laws, etcetera, of the Old Testament is one thing; but his extremely high standard of moral law is quite another.

Paul was also at variance with the ascetic gnostic. Because Paul's beliefs concerning the origin of evil were different, so was his answer for how to cope with evil in one's life. The group of gnostics practiced a rigid asceticism. Paul saw morality and ethics for the believer as walking according to the Spirit: "the just requirements of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit (*kata pneuma*, Rom. 8:4); "if by the Spirit (*ei de pneumati*) you put to death the deeds of the body . . . For all who are led by the Spirit of God (*hosoi gar pneumati theou agontai*) are sons of God" (Rom. 8: 13, 14). The same expressions are repeated in the Galatian epistle: "But if you are led by the Spirit" . . . (*ei de pneumati agesthe*; 5:18); "But I say, walk by the Spirit" *pneumati peripateite*; 5:16). These expressions all imply that the believer receives in salvation not simply a knowledge of God, but also the Person of the Spirit of Christ - "anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him" (Rom. 8:9b). Included in salvation is direction for the believer as he walks according to, or is led by, the Spirit of God. This indicates that according to Paul there is in the believer more than his natural ability and self-determination to bring the body under control. In fact, the Galatian epistle contrasts the "*works* of the flesh" (*ta erga sarkos*; 5:19) and the "*fruit* of the Spirit" (*karpos tou pneumatos*; 5:22), i.e. the various characteristics described are what the Spirit produces in the believer. This is quite in contrast to the gnostics. Indeed, if it were incipient Gnosticism that Paul wrote against in the Colossian epistle, then Paul actually condemns asceticism as practiced by the gnostics.

In the category of morality then Paul is at variance with the antinomians, but he is also at variance with the ascetics regarding the means for attaining a high moral and ethical standard.

6. Eschatology

The category of eschatology is yet another area where very basic differences between Pauline and gnostic views appear. As their doctrines of God, creation, and the essential reason for man's predicament differ, so do their solutions to man's problems, and the conclusions differ.

For the gnostic there will be no accounting for the moral and ethical activity of his earthly sojourn. Either he was in no way responsible for it, or he had through an ascetic discipline successfully overcome the evil and merited a place in the pleroma.

For Paul, the consummation of God's redeeming activity in man had strong moral connotation. As it was pointed out above[13] Paul taught that man does not merit salvation through works, but is saved "as a gift through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 3:24). Paul also makes very clear, however, that each believer becomes a servant of Christ. He has some specific service for the Church (Rom. 12:6; I Cor. 12:7; Eph. 4:7), and is considered a "fellow worker" for God who must account for the manner in which he has served as well as for the moral character of his life:

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[13] Supra, pp. 140-144.

> None of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself. If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ died and lives again, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living. Why do you pass judgment on your brother? . . . For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of God; . . . so each of us shall give account of himself to God (Rom. 14:7-12).

Though Paul writes, "God has not destined us for wrath" (I Thess. 5:9) which seems to mean suffering "the punishment of eternal destruction and exclusion from the glory of his might" (II Thess. 1:9) decreed for the unbelieving, the believer nevertheless must give an account of himself to God. As a result of this accounting, he may "suffer loss, though he himself will be saved but only as through fire" (I Cor. 3:15). This seems to mean that the unfaithful believer will go unrewarded, though he will be permitted entrance into the kingdom. The consummation has a very clear moral connotation then for Paul.

Another very basic distinction in Pauline and gnostic views of eschatology is the ultimate effect of the consummation on man and the universe. A review of the various positions of the gnostics in chapter one will show that aside from the rather unique position of Menander,[14] there is little or no mention of a resurrection. For Paul, on the other hand, the resurrection is foundational:

> How can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised; if Christ has not been raised, then is our preaching in vain and your faith is in vain. We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified of God that he raised Christ whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised then Christ has not been raised. If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and _you are still in your sins_. Then those who have fallen asleep in Christ have _perished_. If in this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all men most to be pitied (I Cor. 15:12-18).

Further in the chapter Paul continues, "If the dead are not raised, 'Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.'" There is no difficulty estimating from these words the important place the resurrection held in Paul's doctrinal scheme. And, years did not change this for him. The character and importance of the resurrection retained its steadfast role. If one chooses to reject Pauline authorship of the pastoral epistles and would then look upon the prison epistles as Paul's latest writing, he would still encounter, e.g. Philippians 3:8-21:

> I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as refuse, in order that I may gain Christ . . . that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, . . . that if possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead . . . forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus . . . our commonwealth is in heaven, and from it

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[14] _Supra_, p. 13.

> we await the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will change our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power which enables him to subject all things to himself.

The resurrection body is described in many ways by Paul: in I Corinthians 15, it is a spiritual body (*soma pneumatikon*) in contrast to a physical body (*soma psuchikon*, v. 44); it is imperishable (v. 42); it is one of power (v. 43); and, as it has just been seen, Philippians 3:21 refers to it as "like his glorious body" (*to somati tes doxes autou*). This evidently refers to the character attributed to Christ's body when He was manifested in His post-resurrection appearances (Luke 24:36-43).

Such doctrine was completely unacceptable to the gnostics. It was out of accord with their cosmogony, theology, anthropology, and soteriology. It consequently had no place in their eschatology.

Closely related to the effect of the *telos* on believers was Paul's belief that the creation will also be affected in this consummation. It was pointed out earlier that the gnostics had little or nothing to say about what happened to the material world at the *telos*. Those who did comment upon it seem to either eliminate it by some catastrophic judgment, or at least in some way remove it to a safe distance from the pure spiritual sphere of the *pleroma*.

Considering Paul's view, "creation was subjected to futility" by God in conjunction with man's "fall," so it appears that as part of the culminating activity of redemption, creation "will be set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the glorious liberty of the children of God" (Rom. 8:20, 21). If as Barclay suggests, Paul's eschatology was influenced by Isaiah,[15] then it would seem the language of Paul may call for a millennial kingdom. Paul didn't consider creation imperfect because it is composed of matter. Therefore, the cure for the ills of creation does not call for its elimination.

7. Summary

On the basis of these contrasts of the categories, I should like to suggest that the number of contrasts between Paul and the gnostics if not equal to are greater than the number of similarities. But more significant than the number of contrasts is the character of these contrasts. The concepts of God, the origin and order of the universe, the origin and nature of man, and the answer to man's dilemma, both immediately and ultimately, clearly show two distinct views of the world and life which are far from being harmonious. One would not move easily from one to the other.

B. Linguistic Similarities Considered

The presence of certain words and expressions in Paul's writings which are also found in gnostic literature strengthens the inclination of some to classify Paul as proto-gnostic. It seems to me, however, that an examination of the data need not lead to that conclusion.

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[15] *Supra*, p. 156.

One must acknowledge the presence of basic words in Paul's writings which are an integral part of second century Gnosticism. Paul uses the word, "fulness" (*pleroma*) in relation to the Godhead (Col. 1:19; 2:9). The expression "elemental spirits of the universe" (*stoicheia tou kosmou*) is found in Galatians 4:3 and Colossians 2:8, 20. The phrase "the rulers--or archons--of this age" (*ton archon tou aionos*) is found in I Corinthians 2:6-8, while "the prince of the power of the air" (*ton archonta tes exousias tou aeros*) is found in Ephesians 2:2. Paul speaks of the natural man (*psuchikos anthropos*) and the spiritual man (*pneumatikos anthropos*, I Cor. 2:14) and he speaks of the perfect man (*teleios*, I Cor. 2:6; Eph. 4:13). These are representative of the more significant terms.

How shall these similarities be evaluated? Do they demand the classification of Paul as proto-gnostic? To answer that question, it is well to look at the background and experience of Paul, and the implications these may have had in his ministry.

Paul was born and apparently spent at least some of his early years in Tarsus, and he evidently returned there for a period of time after his conversion to Jesus Christ before going to Antioch (Acts 9:30; 11:25). Deissmann reminds us that,

> Just as even today on the Cilician plain the two civilizations of Islam, the Turkish and the Arabian, meet, so also in ancient times that country was the threshold of

two civilizations and the bridge between two worlds.[16]

Paul also spent some time in Jerusalem being educated according to the law (Acts 22:3). He was at least bilingual (Acts 21:37, 40). He was acquainted with literature of the day other than the Septuagint (Acts 17:28). His world of travels included Cilicia, Syria, Palestine, Cyprus, Western Asia Minor, Macedonia, Achaia, Italy, and possibly the West beyond Italy. There was a broad undercurrent of common popular religious beliefs and forms of expression in this world of Paul's.[17] Various cultural traditions were in existence.

Because of this cultural influence on Paul and on those to whom he wrote, it was necessary for Paul to adapt the Christian Gospel to the minds of his hearers. It seems logical that he would draw upon the common reservoir of the language of his day to do so.

It should also be observed that Gnosticism was fundamentally syncretistic.[18] It is certainly possible then that incipient Gnosticism and Paul both may have been using similar commonly known terms, but which were not identical in connotation. In some cases conceptions in two different traditions may have been identical and easily assimilated.

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[16] Adolph Deissmann, Paul (New York: Harper & Row, publishers, a Torchbook, 1957), p. 33.

[17] Deissmann, Ibid., p. 42.

[18] Wilson, GNT, p. 6.

In other cases, though they were similar, they were not identical. There appear to be occasions when Paul intentionally uses gnostic terms but does so in such a manner as to give them a distinctly Christian definition.

For example, this basic point is made by Wilson in a quotation from Polybius:

> For while they (the Aetolians) had hoped to find a helpless infant in Philip (paidion nepion), owing to his tender years and inexperience, they really found him to be a grown-up man (teleios aner), both in his projects and in his performances.[19]

The expression teleios aner or its equivalent is found several times in Paul's writings and is also a basic term in early gnostic writings. Here, Polybius seems to use it in a sense different from either Paul or the gnostics. As Wilson observes, "To reckon Polybius as Gnostic would be Pangnostizismus indeed!"[20]

Turning to some representative common terms in Pauline and early gnostic literature also affords examples which demonstrate that although words and phrases may be identical, their connotations may be very different.

One such example is the word "mystery" (musterion). In the gnostic literature the connotation of this word was that of some secret formula known only to the initiated. It enabled them perhaps to attain true gnosis, or it may have been the key by which they passed successfully through the heavens and into the pleroma. To Paul it simply meant a truth presently revealed with more clarity than heretofore. There was nothing secret or restrictive to only those of the Church. It was for all to know. It may have been only the Church which understood the truth, but it was never withheld from those outside the Church. Colossians 1:25-28 illustrates the use of the word by Paul:

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[19] Ibid., p. 37.

[20] Ibid., p. 37.

> I became a minister according to the divine office which was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known, the mystery hidden for ages and generations but now made manifest to his saints. To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. Him we proclaim, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man mature in Christ.

Another illustration is Paul's use of pleroma. The connotation of this word in gnostic literature is "the fullness," "the totality," "the completeness of all things." It was that from which all good came and to which all good would return and be completely taken up in it. It includes all the spiritual hierarchy above the Demiurge.[21] Paul uses the term in Colossians 1:19, "for in him all the fullness was pleased to dwell" (hoti en autou eudokesen pan to pleroma katoikesai). The connotation here is hardly that of the gnostics. This is clear from its parallel reference in 2:9, "For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily."[22] This means the totality of divine powers and attributes.[23] It is also clear from Paul's purpose in this context where he is in effect saying that the one who believes in the Son who is God incarnate (2:9) is one who has been "made full" (pepleromenoi) or as the New English Bible translates it, "and in him you have been brought to completion." Consequently there is no need for self abasement and worship of angels; that is, there is no need to follow the doctrines of the gnostics to be saved. The use of the word here by Paul seems intentional and polemic.

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[21] G. Van Gronigen, First Century Gnosticism Its Origin and Motifs (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1967), p. 177.

[22] New English Bible, "the complete being of the Godhead dwells embodied."

Paul makes a distinction between the natural and the spiritual man, and his use of these expressions seems quite different than that of the gnostics. The spiritual man for Paul is not a man who has come to know his true self and destiny as the gnostics used the word. He is rather one who as a consequence of faith in Jesus Christ has come into the Spirit, "you are in the Spirit, if the Spirit of God really dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him" (Rom. 8:9); "Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is from God, that we might understand the gifts bestowed on us by God" (I Cor. 2:12). The natural man is one who has not believed in Jesus Christ, and does not have the Holy Spirit. Even if the expression is identical, the meaning is quite different.

It is also possible to question the identity of connotation between Paul and the early gnostic's use of the word stoicheia. The word for the gnostics was associated with lesser spirits who supposedly ruled over the various planets - the stoicheia of this kosmos. The word is used seven times in the New Testament. Paul uses it four of the seven. Liddel-Scott's Greek-English Lexicon defines it as element, simple sound, components into which matter is ultimately divisible, the elements of proof (in reasoning), elementary or fundamental principle, and finally, the stars, planets. In II Peter 3:10 and 12 it must mean components into which matter is ultimately divisible. In Hebrews 5:12, it must mean elementary doctrines taught to young believers.

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[23] Supra, p. 130

How does Paul use this word? In Galatians 4:3, 9 the Revised Standard Version translates, "when we were children we were slaves to the elemental spirits of the universe . . . how can you turn back to weak and beggarly elemental spirits?" The New English Bible is somewhat similar, "During our minority we were slaves to the elemental spirits of the universe . . . how can you turn back to the mean and beggarly spirits of the elements?" The New English Bible does, however, footnote 4:3 and give the alternate translation, "or elements of the natural world, or elementary ideas belonging to this world." It seems to me that the alternate translation of the New English Bible is to be preferred. In the context of these expressions, Paul is relating to the Galatians that they should not subject themselves to the law because it has nothing to do with being justified

(3:1-18). Its function was as "a kind of tutor in charge of us until Christ should come" (3:24 NEB). Paul seems to mean that just as a tutor is charged to tutor a boy until he reaches a legal age, so the law is over men until in the fulness of time God sent His Son to free us from the law by becoming an accursed thing for our sake (4:1-5; 3:13). Paul seems to look on the law here in much the same manner as the writer of Hebrews who saw it as "symbolic" (9:9), as "various abultions, regulations for the body imposed until the time of reformation" (9:10), as elementary and outward or physical symbols of the spiritual truth brought by Christ. The commandments were a standard of righteousness, and the ceremonial law pointed to atonement through a substitute bearing the offerer's penalty. In carrying out the analogy, Paul says since Christ has come there is no longer need for the tutor i.e. for the Galatians, or anyone else, to subject themselves to the law for salvation. There is no need to turn back to elementary, symbolic regulations. It was, after all, the law to which the Galatians were turning (3:1) and not their former paganism - which may very well have included the belief in planetary rulers. Paul's use of the word stoicheia in this place seems more probably to mean "elementary ideas belonging to this world," or the law as earthly or a material symbol of Christ's ministry as it is portrayed in the epistle to the Hebrews.

If his use of the same word in Colossians 2:8 and 20 is anything it is polemical. When he says, "See to it no one makes a prey of you . . . according to the elemental spirits of the universe . . . if with Christ you died to the elementary spirits of the universe," it does not seem necessary to insist that Paul believed in spiritual rulers of the planets. Again the New English Bible footnotes and gives the alternate translation of "or rudimentary notions." The context is akin to the Galatian problem. Intruders were attempting to persuade the Colossians that they needed to submit to regulations, "Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch (referring to things which all perish as they are used), according to human precepts and doctrines" (Col. 2:21, 22). Paul is reminding them that they "have been brought to completion" in Christ, and there is no need for regulations of any kind.

Paul's use ~~of~~ the expression "third heaven" would not seem to be identical to gnostic's use either. Laying aside the question of similarity of cosmogony, there is a substantial difference in the consequence of Paul's experience when compared to a gnostic parallel. Paul was in no way transformed by his experience of ascension. The gnostic on the other hand came to be "in true and eternal life" through his ascension.[24]

The presence of similar language in the writings of Paul and the early gnostics need not then lead to the conclusion that Paul was proto-gnostic. The comment of Robert Wilson will serve as a useful conclusion on this point:

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[24] M. Malenine, H. C. Puech and Quispel, eds. & trans., The Gospel of Truth (Zurich, 1956), p. 43.

> It is evident that if we approach from the side of the second Christian century, and interpret in the light of the later Gnostic systems, there is much in the New Testament that may be claimed as "Gnostic." When we begin at the other end, however, and endeavor to trace the historical development, it is another matter. In most cases the "Gnostic" features admit of another interpretation, and seldom if ever is the Gnostic explanation absolutely demanded as the one explanation which alone is possible.[25]

C. The Eschatological Emphasis

I should like to examine now the point that in Paul's writings there is a progressive de-emphasis in the apocalyptic and in eschatology. When seen in the light of the similarities of doctrines, and the similarities of language, this point stands out as a significant factor in the minds of those who regard Paul as proto-gnostic. Dr. Grant, e.g. sees it as fitting precisely into his thesis that Gnosticism rose out of disillusioned apocalypticism.[26] According to Dr. Grant, Paul's message in his early epistles was originally apocalyptic. Later, however, according to Dr. Grant, Paul modified his views and the emphasis of the apocalyptic diminished while proto-gnostic views developed. Dr. Grant also believes this modification accounts for the fact that the expression "the kingdom of God" is used less frequently in Paul's later epistles.

It seems to me, however, that the point is not easily made. I should like first to consider just how apocalyptic

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[25] GNT, p. 58.

[26] GEC, p. 36.

Paul's teaching in eschatology was. Second, I should like to point out that eschatology in Paul's writings is not absent in the later epistles, but rather that it still is an important emphasis. Finally, I should like to offer an explanation of why I believe that quantitatively it does not hold the same place in the later epistles that it held in the earlier letters. One can appreciate Dr. Grant's point that the enthusiasm of apocalypticism declined in Judaism at the close of the first century and beginning of the second century A.D.[27] It should be asked, however, how apocalyptic was Paul, and what was Paul's relation to this decline?

That there were apocalyptic details in Paul's letters is to be admitted. He speaks of the coming of the Lord as an expected and fateful future event (I Cor. 4:5; 11:26; I Thess. 1:10; 2:7). He reproduces a primitive prayer in I Corinthians 16:22 by a Greek transliteration of the original Aramaic, maran atha, which is to be translated as "Our Lord, come!" He uses the Greek word parousia which had acquired a technical designation for Christ's Second Coming. As Shires says, "There can be little question that Paul has in this area borrowed some descriptive material from Jewish apocalyptic writing."[28] However, as Shires goes on to point out, "Whereas Paul does reproduce some apocalyptic material in connection with his discussion of the Parousia, the remarkable point is that he makes such little use of it."[29] Shires then makes reference to a statement in H. A. A. Kennedy's book, St. Paul's Conception of the Last Things:

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[27] GEC, pp. 33, 34.

[28] Henry M. Shires, The Eschatology of Paul (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1966), p. 65.

> In marked contrast with the prophetic descriptions of the Day of the Lord, the apostle scarcely ever paints a picture of the Parousia. The only real instance occurs in the earliest of his letters, I Thess. 4:16-18.[30]

Certainly Dr. Grant is correct in saying the emphasis on the apocalyptic diminishes in Paul's writings, but then how great was it to begin with?

A more important point, however, is the inference that this same pattern marks the eschatology of Paul, and especially his expectation of the realization of the kingdom of God. It seems inaccurate to me to say that these have diminished in Paul values, which is the implication Dr. Grant draws from the data. It can not only be shown that they are present in Paul's later epistles, but it can also be shown that they have lost none of their importance to him.

It has already been pointed out that throughout the years from approximately 45-64 A.D., Paul referred to the coming of the Lord in his writings.[31] It is referred to in his epistle to the Thessalonians, and it is referred to in the prison epistles. In fact, there are references either to Christ's coming or the resurrection in Philippians 3:11, 20, 21 and Colossians 3:4, 24; 4:2, 6. The doctrine is not absent from his epistles, either the early or the late ones.

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[29] Ibid., p. 66.

[30] Ibid., p. 246.

[31] Supra, p. 154.

Second, eschatology clearly remains an important motivation for Paul for responsible moral and ethical conduct whether early, "but you are not in darkness, brethren, for that day to surprise you like a thief" (I Thess. 5:4), or late, "When Christ . . . appears then you also will appear with him in glory. Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: immorality, impurity, etc., (Col. 3:4, 5). Not only is this so, but throughout his lifetime the resurrection represents to Paul the keystone of any hope there is in the Gospel in which he believes, and which he preaches to others, be it early, "And the dead in Christ will rise" (I Thess. 4:16b); or late, "that if possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead" (Phil. 3:11).

As to the point that the term the "kingdom of God" is used less frequently by Paul in his later epistles, several things must be considered. First, Paul evidently did not surrender the use of the term later in his ministry. Regarding his prison ministry the author of Acts wrote, "And he lived there two whole years . . . preaching the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 28:30). If one objects to the fact that Acts is not Pauline literature then one can point to I Corinthians 6:9, "Do you not know the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God?" or 15:24, "Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father." However, it is not simply the use of a word alone. That which accompanies the parousia and the resurrection seems clearly to be an earthly kingdom. In Romans 8:19-22 in conjunction with the believer's glorification, Paul's reference to the rectification of sin's effect on creation seems to call for an earthly kingdom. So does his reference in Romans 11:25ff. to the national conversion of Israel. Both of these references reflect the influence of Isaiah's millennial teaching on Paul.[32] It should also be pointed out that the expression "kingdom of God" would be a very meaningful term to the Jewish believers, but it would be far less meaningful to the Gentile believers. If there is a less frequent use of a word or expression, there seems to be no diminution of the concept or its importance.

Finally, how may any quantitative de-emphasis of eschatology in Paul's writings be accounted for? It is obvious that Paul's letters are not theological treatises, and it is equally obvious that he does not speak to every theological issue in each letter. One should remember that Paul's letters generally were written because of some specific need(s) of the churches. The concerns of the churches during the years of Paul's ministry were largely in the area of soteriology, not eschatology. What was the relation of the law and circumcision to the doctrine of justification by faith? What were the implications of the doctrine of justification by faith on one's moral and ethical life as a Jewish believer, or a former pagan, Gentile believer? What were the implications of the Gospel on the interpersonal relations of the Jew and Gentile in the Church? What were the implications outside of the Church with unbelievers? What were the implications of one's membership in the kingdom of God on his citizenship in an earthly government? These were the basic questions to which Paul addressed himself. For some specific reason, not clearly known, questions regarding eschatology were raised at Thessalonica. Otherwise problems seemed to center in soteriology and morality.

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[32] Supra, p. 156.

CONCLUSION

It has been my purpose to try to demonstrate that Paul need not be classified as proto-gnostic. There are those who classify him as such because they believe to do so best accounts for the similarities which exist in gnostic and Pauline literature.

Using selected categories, the beliefs of gnostic groups from the second century A.D. back through the first century A.D. have been surveyed. The survey crystallized the basic gnostic doctrines. The same process was then repeated from select writings of Paul. The results were then compared and contrasted. The comparison revealed that there are a significant number of areas in which there are similarities. Common terms, concepts, and what some scholars believe to be similar emphases, encourage these same scholars to classify Paul as proto-gnostic. The contrast of the two positions as pointed up by the survey, however, revealed basic doctrinal differences which would render it quite difficult for one holding to either position to be committed to the other position. Further, this study accounted for the presence of common concepts and language in Pauline and gnostic literature and presented an alternate explanation for the "de-emphasis" of a doctrine which is believed to support the view that Paul was proto-gnostic.

The writer submits that the factors brought out in the surveys and analyses of this thesis demonstrate that it is not necessary to conclude from the available data that Paul was proto-gnostic.

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